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THE CHOWKHAMBA SANSKRIT STUDIES VOL. LXXVII

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA

DR T. S. RUKMANI

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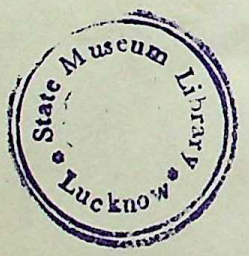

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THE
CHOWKHAMBA SANSKRIT STUDIES
VOL. LXXVII

A CRITICAL STUDY
OF
THE BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA

(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHAKTI)

BY
Dr T. S. RUKMANI

THE
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To

My Dear Parents

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to write these lines by way of introducing to Sanskritists the 'Bhāgavata Purāṇa : a study' by Dr. (Mrs.) T. S. Rukmani, who was my colleague at the University of Delhi in the Department. I had an occasion in one of our research seminars, to listen to Dr. Rukmani, discussing 'Vaiṣṇavism in the South' and I was struck by her industry in the collection of date, insight into their interpretation and significance and an able presentation. Later, I had an occasion to go through the present dissertation which only confirm those impressions. To study a Purāṇa, is to wade through a labyrinth of myths, contradictory and exaggerated narrations and confused historical and geographical traditions. To separate from this bewildering material, trustworthy details, to present a sober account, requires industry, patience and critical insight. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is no exception to all this. It has been rightly observed *'Vidyāvatāṃ bhāgavate parīkṣā.'* This has naturally given Dr. Rukmani an opportunity to reveal her scholarly attainments. She has assigned the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, rightly enough, to the fifth century; she has also given us a good account of the development of Bhakti cult, rightly pointing out that it has not been borrowed; and an account of the rich and varied contents of this Purāṇa—historical, geographical, religious and philosophical. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has engaged the attention of scholars and many studies are now available and I am sure that the present study by

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Dr. Rukmani will mean a significant contribution to these studies. The Purāṇas have been generally ignored and these studies will go a long way in bringing home to lovers of Sanskrit the importance of Purāṇic studies. As the tradition rightly asserts the Purāṇas supplement the Vedas and enable us to understand them better. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is indeed a mine of captivating poetical passages that lift one and Dr. Rukmani could have given us an appreciation of this poetry of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that has served as a maid to Bhakti and Philosophy. She has, by this work, raised expectations and she certainly has all that is necessary to fulfil them. I wish her success.

T. G. MAINKAR

Bhandarkar Professor of Sanskrit and Head of the Sanskrit Deptt., University of Bombay.
Formerly Pandit Man Mohan Dar Professor of Sanskrit and Head of the Department, University of Delhi.

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PREFACE

The Purāṇas, along with the epics, embody the popular religious sentiments of the Hindus. Belonging to a period later than the Vedas, we find in them an attempt to accommodate and synthesise different trends of thoughts and beliefs which existed at the time. Generally known as the fifth Veda these voluminous texts served to highlight not only the religious beliefs of the common man but also the prevalent historical, geographical and sociological ideas. Along with the Mahābhārata they can thus be called an encyclopaedia of ancient Indian thought.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa as one of the important Purāṇas has influenced the Hindu mind for many centuries and has been responsible for the rise of many sects connected with bhakti. A study of this Purāṇa was suggested by my guru Dr. N. N. Choudhury former Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Delhi. I am deeply indebted to him for his guidance during my research.

I am grateful to Dr. T. G. Mainkar, Bhandarkar Professor of Sanskrit and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Bombay, who found time to read this work and who has also written the foreword.

My thanks are due to my husband who has helped me in preparing the index and in reading the proofs.

This work was accepted by the University of Delhi for the Ph. D. degree under the same title.

T. S. Rukmani

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CONTENTS

		Page
Foreword	... ...	v
Preface	... ...	vii
Abbreviations	... ...	xi
Introduction	... ...	xiii
Chapter I	: The Bhāgavata Purāṇa. ...	1
Chapter II	: A Review of the contents of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. ...	15
Chapter III	: A critical study of some legends in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. ...	88
Chapter IV	: Special features of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.	127
Chapter V	: The origin and development of the conception of bhakti with special reference to the Bhāgavata cult. ...	174
Chapter VI	: Vaiṣṇavism in different parts of India with special reference to the Bhāgavata dharma. ...	214
Chapter VII	: Image worship and images in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. ...	250
Chapter VIII	: Some striking social customs described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. ...	271
Appendix	... ...	319
Bibliography	... ...	330
General Index	... ...	337
Subject Index	... ...	358
Index of Verses from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, used sources arranged Skandha wise. ...	...	365

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
Aita. Brāh.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
Ait. Āraṇ.	Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
Āpas. DS.	Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra.
AV.	Atharvaveda.
Baudh. DS.	Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra.
BD.	Bṛhaddevatā.
Bha. Gītā	Bhagavad Gītā
Bhā. P.	Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
Bharata Nāṭya.	Bharata Nāṭyaśāstra.
Bṛ. Up.	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad.
BS.	Brahma Sūtra
Chānd. Up.	Chāndogyopaniṣad.
Iśa. Up.	Īśāvāsyopaniṣad.
Jaimi. Brāh.	Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa.
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
Kal. Kalpa.	Kalyāna Kalpataru.
Kaṭha. Up.	Kaṭhopaniṣad.
Kāṭha. Sam.	Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā.
Kauśi. Brāh.	Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa
Kaut. Artha.	Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra.
Kūr. P.	Kūrma Purāṇa.
Maitri. Up.	Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad.
Mār. P.	Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.
Mat. P.	Matsya Purāṇa.
MBH.	Mahābhārata.
MBH. Mokṣa.	Mahābhārata Mokṣadharma.

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Muṇḍ. Up.	Muṇḍakopaniṣad.
Manu Smṛ.	Manu Smṛti.
Nārada BS.	Nārada Bhakti Sūtra.
P.	Purāṇa
Pad. P.	Padma Purāṇa.
Rāma.	Rāmāyaṇa.
RV.	Ṛgveda.
Sāṅkh Śrauta.	Śāṅkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
Sarvānu.	Sarvānukramaṇī.
Śata. Brāh.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
Saupti.	Sauptikaparva.
SBE.	Sacred Books of the East.
SV.	Sāmaveda.
Śvet. Up.	Śvetāśvataropaniṣad.
Taitt. Āraṇ.	Taittarīya Āraṇyaka.
Taitt. Sam.	Taittriīya Saṁhitā.
Taitt. Up.	Taittirīyopaniṣad.
Uttara.	Uttararāma Carita.
Vājasa. Sam.	Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā.
Viṣ. P.	Viṣṇu Purāṇa.
Yāj. Smṛ.	Yajñavalkya Smṛti.
YV.	Yajurveda.

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INTRODUCTION

Among the Purāṇas the Bhāgavata Purāṇa can be easily called the most important. Its influence as a religious book has been phenomenal comparable only to the epics—the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. This in itself is enough inducement to take up the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as a subject for research. The absence of a comprehensive book dealing on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also made me take up this subject for study.

Articles on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa like its date, its authorship, the interpolations in the Purāṇa, etc. are found in the various journals. Books like 'The Life and Teachings of Sree Krishna', 'Krishna the Darling of Humanity' all give the main incidents of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life as given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. H. C. Raychaudhuri's 'Materials for the study of the Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect' deals with the 'Kṛṣṇa problem' and the growth of the Bhāgavata School in general. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has also been translated into English by a number of scholars like S. Subba Rao, J. M. Sanyal and Swami Vijñānānanda. The Gita Press, Gorakhpur has also translated the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in English. V. R. Ramacandra Dikshitar deals with the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also in his 'Purāṇa Index'. Śrī Purnendu Sinha has studied the Bhāgavata Purāṇa from a theosophical point of view in his 'Study of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa or Esoteric Hinduism'. Thus all these books, it will be seen, deal only with one or another aspect of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. A book dealing solely with the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is thus a necessity.

Though the title of the book is 'A Critical Study of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa' right from the start it was the religious side which attracted my attention and that is expressed in the line 'with special reference to bhakti' put in brackets in the heading.

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Bhakti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has been given the maximum attention while other aspects have also not been forgotten.

There are in all eight chapters in the book with an appendix at the end.

The first chapter is of an introductory nature describing the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in general.

The date and authorship of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has been briefly discussed and some special features of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa have been pointed out. These special features have been later elaborated in the fourth chapter.

The second chapter is a review of the contents of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The contents of the twelve skandhas have been given and wherever possible a critical and comparative study has been made. Thus while dealing with the creation accounts in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, a comparison has been made between that and the Sāṅkhya theory of creation and the difference between the two has been pointed out.

Mention has been made of the various dynasties given in the Purāṇa but a critical analysis has not been given as Pargiter has already done much work on the subject.

An attempt has been made to interpret certain incidents in a new light. Thus it has been shown that the death of Parikṣit could have been caused as much by murder as through snake poison.

Certain legends like that of the Dakṣa yajña, the Śunaḥśepa legend, etc. have been studied critically and comparatively in the third chapter. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa contains many legends but for want of space only some three or four were chosen for a critical study. In this chapter are also discussed the question of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The fourth chapter deals with the special features of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Herein are mentioned the ten characteristics of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa with the importance it lays on Āśraya. (Śaraṇāgati, prapatti). Āśraya and its practical application in the lives of bhaktas like Ambarīṣa, Prahlāda, Uddhava and others has been discussed in detail.

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A study of Nāmajapa (Nāmopāsana) in comparison with other texts like the Upaniṣads and the Gītā forms part of the fourth chapter.

A very important aspect of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is that here even people like Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra are allowed into the realm of God. It is usually understood that only those who are friendly towards Bhagavān and worship Him lovingly attain mukti. But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has widened the scope of bhakti to include the enemies of Bhagavān like Śiśupāla and othors in its fold. This aspect of bhakti has been dealt with elaborately.

A critical study of the Rāsalīlā finds a place in this chapter, a general description having been given in the second chapter. The Rāsalīlā has been interpreted as an allegory and the language of the author has been cited, wherever possible, to prove that the Rāsa was employed as an allegory by the author.

The view that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the bhāṣya of the Gītā has been kept in mind throughout the work and examples have been pointed out whenever there was a chance. Thus in Nāmajapa, Āśraya and the Rāsalīla it has been shown that they elaborate with examples what has been already said in the Gītā. The Vastraharaṇa has also been interpreted as an allegory in this chapter.

The theory that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is an interpretation of the Gāyatrī mantra has been briefly examined in the concluding portion of this chapter.

The fifth chapter deals with the origin and development of the conception of bhakti with special reference to the Bhāgavata cult. Bhakti has been traced back to the Vedas and it has been shown how bhakti developed and came to be associated with Viṣṇu in later times. The identification of Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva with Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa has been briefly discussed. Since the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is one of the texts of the Bhāgavata school of philosophy a brief study of some doctrines of the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra school has been made. The Vyūhas and the avatāras are discussed among other things.

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The sixth chapter is on Vaiṣṇavism in different parts of the country with special reference to the Bhāgavata dharma. Firstly the widespread prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism as evidenced by the many Vaiṣṇava inscriptions is depicted. Secondly a study of the different Vaiṣṇava movements in the land has been made trying to find out the influence that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa had on them. Thus for instance while dealing with the Āḻvārs (Vaiṣṇava saints of the South) a comparison has been made, wherever possible between their teachings and that of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Some important Vaiṣṇava temples also form part of this chapter.

The seventh chapter discusses the question of images and image worship in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The various images described in the text have been pointed out and studied in comparison with iconographic texts like the Śilparatna. The existence of similar images in temples of the present day have also been given side by side.

And in the last chapter an attempt has been made to study, from an uubiased, historical standpoint, certain striking social customs which we come across in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Here are discussed among other things the question of marriage, the position of women, sati, popular religious beliefs, trade and industries, entertainment and many more topics of social interest.

The appendix deals briefly with the prose passages contained in the fifth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Here are also pointed out certain archaic words in the Purāṇa and passages which bear comparison to the Vedic texts (Upaniṣads) and the Gītā.

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A CRITICAL STUDY
OF
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With Special Reference to Bhakti.

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CHAPTER I

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The Purāṇas play an important role in the life of the Hindus. Many of the beliefs and practices of the Hindus are based on these books which are voluminous religious compositions advocating the means by which eternal bliss can be obtained.

The principal Purāṇas, which are eighteen in number, have exercised great influence in moulding the religious opinion as well as the mode of life of the common people. Avoiding the academic subtleties and metaphysical profundity of the Vedas, the Purāṇas present in an easily assimilable form and in an attractive garb the essential principles and doctrines of the Hindu religion.

The definition, origin and the general contents of the eighteen Purāṇas can be found described in any book dealing with the history of Sanskrit literature. A general discussion on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has been given in this chapter.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa[1]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the most famous among the Purāṇas and its influence on the religion of the people is profound. Speaking about the Bhāgavata, Emerson, one of the wisest men of America, says that it is a book which should be read on one's knees. Wilson remarks that "the Bhāgavata is a work of great celebrity in India and exercises a more direct and powerful influence upon the opinions and feelings of the people, than perhaps any other of the Purāṇas." It is usually remarked that "like the Gītā the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is a book of synthesis and the narrow partisan spirit displayed by the Purāṇa literature in general is absent from it."

---

1. यत्राधिकृत्य गायत्रीं वर्ण्यते धर्मविस्तरः । वृत्रासुरवधोपेतं तद्भागवतमुच्यते ॥ सारस्वतस्य कल्पस्य मध्ये ये स्युर्नरामराः । तद्वृत्तान्तोद्भवं लोके तद्भागवत-मुच्यते ॥ अष्टादशसहस्राणि पुराणं तत्प्रकीर्तितम् ॥

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The Padma Purāṇa places the Bhāgavata as the eighteenth Purāṇa though in other lists it is given as the fifth.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is divided into twelve Skandhas and contains about 18,000 ślokas. It is narrated by Śuka, the son of Vyāsa, to king Parīkṣit, in answer to the king's question as to what a man should do when about to die. The cosmogonic myths are mostly like those in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa with slight differences. Its cosmogony has a Vedāntic touch rather than the usual Sāṅkhyan influence which all Purāṇas reveal. Thus Farquhar is right when he says that the philosophic teaching of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, stands nearer to Śaṅkara's system than to the theistic Sāṅkhya which dominates other Purāṇic works.[1]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa specializes in Viṣṇu's incarnations and as many as forty incarnations are mentioned together with the statement that avatāras are innumerable.[2] Among the avatāras we find mention of Kapila, the founder of the Sāṅkhya system and Buddha as well.

There is much in common between the Viṣṇu and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, apart from both of them being dedicated to Viṣṇu. Thus R. C. Hazra in his "Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs" says, "as regards the contents, the Bhāgavata is closely connected with the Viṣṇu with which it often agrees literally and it is undoubtedly dependent on the latter." As for the genealogies Pargiter tells us in his 'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' that the Bhāgavata has used the Viṣṇu in composition. Legends like those of Dhruva, Pṛthu, Vena, Prahlāda, Jadabharata and others appear in a concise form in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa while they are enlarged upon in the Bhāgavata.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has much in common with the Mahābhārata. Some verses from the Bhagavad Gītā are

---

1. Farquhar 'Outline of the Religious Literature of India' p. 231.
2. अवतारा ह्यसंख्येया हरेः सत्वनिधेर्द्विजाः । यथाविदासिनः कुल्याः सरसः स्युः सहस्रशः ॥ Bhā. P. I. 3. 26.

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quoted literally[1] and the Śakuntalā episode is described in IX. 20. The tenth Skandha contains the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is here given in greater detail than in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and in the Harivamśa. It hardly refers to his later life but deals minutely with Kṛṣṇa's boyhood and youth. Rādhā does not appear here and therefore some are of the opinion that she is a later creation. In the XIth skandha the annihilation of the Yādavas and the death of Kṛṣṇa are given. And the last skandha contains the usual prophecies regarding the Kaliyuga and the destruction of the world.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa enjoys its privileged position in the Indian mind as a gospel of bhakti. Bhakti is the feeling of deep loving adoration in the devotee's heart for his god. The Bhāgavata preaches the highest form of bhakti which does not seek for the fulfilment of any desire and is unconditional.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has been responsible for the rise of many sects of Vaiṣṇavas. Its influence has been phenomenal. 'Retelling the old stories with new force, it breathes a new intellectual spirit giving original turns to the ideas found in the earlier texts and expressing them with a rare pointedness'. It brought about a synthesis of knowledge and devotion and inspired fresh devotional movements which continue up to this day.

---

1. (a) न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् । कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म गुणैः स्वाभाविकैर्बलात् ॥ Bhā P. VI. 1. 53

Cf. न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् । कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वप्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ Bha. Gītā. III. 5.

(b) यद्यदाचरति श्रेयानितरस्तत्तदीहते । स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ Bhā. P. VI. 2. 4.

Cf. यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः । स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ Bha. Gītā. III. 21.

(c) पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ Bhā. P. X. 81. 4.

Cf. पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ Bha. Gītā. IX. 26.

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The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has given rise to innumerable songs, dramas, romances, pictures and dances all connected with the boyhood and youth of Kṛṣṇa. The teaching of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagvad Gītā is comparatively for the few, but the ravishing beauty of Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is for all. The latter is enshrined in the hearts of millions of men and women in India.

It is usually said that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa begins where the Mahābhārata ends 'seeking to correct a story which tells of gambling, dishonouring women and a devastating war which ends in a pyrrhic victory, and neglects the emphasis on the glory of the Lord and devotion to Him.' So Nārada tells Vyāsa,[1] 'It was a great error on your part to have enjoined terrible acts (acts involving destruction of life) in the name of religion on men who are naturally addicted to such acts. Misguided by these precepts of yours (in the Mahābhārata) the ordinary man of the world would believe such acts to be pious and would refuse to honour the teachings that prohibit such action' and urges Vyāsa to concentrate on the pure glory of the Lord.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa has some peculiar features. Thus firstly it does not confine itself to the pañcalakṣaṇa definition but describes itself as a daśalakṣaṇa Purāṇa. The ten topics discussed here are sarga, visarga, sthāna, poṣaṇa, ūti, manvantara, Īśānukathā, nirodha, mukti and āśraya. There is a significant statement under this verse saying that āśraya is the main thing and all the other nine topics are discussed in order to present a clear conception of āśraya.[2] Āśraya or śaraṇāgati is the key note of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the text advocates complete self surrender to Bhagavān. This as well as other

1. जुगुप्सितं धर्मकृतेऽनुशासतः स्वभावरक्तस्य महान् व्यतिक्रमः ।
यद्वाक्यतो धर्म इतीतरः स्थितो न मन्यते तस्य निवारणं जनः ॥
Bha. P. I. 5. 15.

2. अत्र सर्गो विसर्गश्च स्थानं पोषणमूतयः ।
मन्वन्तरेशानुकथा निरोधो मुक्तिराश्रयः ॥ Bha. P. II. 10. I.
दशमस्य विशुद्ध्यर्थं नवानामिह लक्षणम् ।
वर्णयन्ति महात्मानः श्रुतेनार्थेन चाञ्जसा ॥ Bha. P. II. 10, 2.

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features of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa have been dealt with in detail in the fourth chapter. Another special characteristic of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is that it does not deny salvation even to people like Śiśupāla. Mukti is assured not only to those who worship God in a friendly spirit but also to His enemies like Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra. The use of archaic words and words conforming to vedic grammar are other peculiarities of this Purāṇa.

Nāmasankīrtana or nāmopāsana is given an important place in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. A bhakta need not go through elaborate forms of worship to please his God. He has just to recite the name of the Lord and salvation will be his. And that is not all. The Purāṇa goes a step further and says that nāmasankīrtana can be done consciously or unconsciously but the result will be the same as in the case of medicine which when taken either consciously or unconsciously will take effect.[1] The story of Ajamīla is given at great length to illustrate the efficacy of nāmopāsana. These features have been discussed later on in the fourth chapter.

Date and authorship

Many scholars are inclined to place the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as the latest of the eighteen Purāṇas. There is no lack of ancient or old material in it but as a work it is the latest of all. Thus there is a statement in the Padma Purāṇa saying that Vyāsa promulgated the Bhāgavata last of all as the extracted essence of all the rest. Side by side there is a theory that the grammarian Vopadeva is the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Vopadeva (who lived about the second half of the thirteenth century A. D.) is the author of the Muktāphala which is dependent on the Bhāgavata and he is also the author of the Harilīlā, an Anukramaṇi (index) to the Bhāgavata. Colebrooke, Burnouf and Wilson believe the Bhāgavata to be the work of Vopadeva, thus assigning it to the thirteenth cen-

1. अज्ञानादथवा ज्ञानादुत्तमश्लोकनाम यत् ।
संकीर्तितमघं पुंसो दहेदेधो यथाऽनलः ॥
यथागदं वीर्यतममुपयुक्तं यदृच्छया ।
अजानतोऽप्यात्मगुणं कुर्यान्मन्त्रोऽप्युदाहृतः ॥ Ibid. VI. 2. 18–19.

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tury A. D. But this theory is untenable, for Ānandatirtha Madhva who regarded the Bhāgavata as fully inspired and used it in the propagation of his sect, lived at least fifty years earlier than Vopadeva. If Madhva regarded the Bhāgavata as inspired that implies its existence for some considerable time before the days of Madhva's activity. About 1400 A. D. Śrīdhara Svāmin, Mahant of the Śaṅkarite monastery Govardhana, wrote a commentary on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata Bhāvārtha Dīpika. This is the most famous commentary on the Purāṇa and Śrīdhara begins his work with the statement that the Bhāgavata was not written by Vopadeva.

C. V. Vaidya is of the opinion that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is later than the age of Śaṅkara (beginning of the ninth century A. D.) and earlier than Jayadeva's Gīta Govinda (12th century A. D.) since it does not mention Rādhā.

Alberuni in his work on India which was completed in 1030 A. D. gives us a list of the Purāṇas as it was in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in his day. This list is exactly the same as the list in our Mss. of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa of today. This points to the fact that by the eleventh century A. D. the Bhāgavata Purāṇa had been written and had gained its place as the fifth of the Purāṇas.

Dr. R. C. Hazra holds that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa belongs to the latter half of the sixth century A. D. Bhandarkar is of the opinion that this Purāṇa must have been composed at least two centuries before Ānandatirtha Madhva.[1] Pargiter places the Purāṇa about the ninth century A. D.[2] whereas Farquhar thinks that it belongs to about 900 A. D.[3] C. Elliot remarks that "It does not belong to the latest class of Purāṇas, for it seems to contemplate the performance of Smārtha rites not temple ceremonial."[4]

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1. Bhandarkar 'Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other Minor Religious Systems of India.' p. 49.
2. Pargiter 'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' p. 80.
3. Farquhar Ibid p. 229 f.
4. C. Elliot 'Hinduism and Buddhism' Vol. II. p. 188 n.

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There are scholars who assign a period somewhere before 620 A. D. to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. For instance Dikshitar dates the Bhāgavata as a work belonging to the third century A. D. Dīkshitar's conclusion is based on the cult of the Saṅkarṣaṇa-Vāsudeva which prevailed from the sixth century B. C. to about the third century A. D.

Pāṇini and Patañjali referred to Vāsudeva as a divine being glorified by the Sātvatas. The Bhāgavata also says that Vāsudeva and Baladeva were regarded as gods by Sātvatas; this is corroborated by the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata. Śilappadikāram, a Tamil classic of the second century A. D. was familiar with this cult. Gradually the Balarāma cult was given up and Vāsudeva became the Supreme God, identified with Nārāyaṇa. The point we have to note is that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not specifically mention the Sankarṣaṇa—Vāsudeva cult. 'So it is reasonable to conjecture' argues Dikshitar 'that the Bhāgavata arose after the Saṅkarṣaṇa-Vāsudeva cult disappeared and when the Vāsudeva cult was all in all. According to Dikṣhitar this must have been the time when the Imperial Guptas were rising into prominence and thus dates the Bhāgavata to the third century A. D.

Winternitz is of the view that there are good grounds for assigning the Bhāgavata Purāṇa to the tenth century A. D.[1]

Mr. D. S. Sharma writing in 'The Religion of the Hindus' assigns the Bhāgavata to the tenth century. 'An unknown poet of great imagination, having assimilated the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Harivamśa, produced at the beginning of the tenth century A.D. the Bhāgavata Purāṇa'[2].

Mr. D. A. Pai in his 'Monograph on the religious sects among the Hindus' writes that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa seems to be the work of a body of ascetics who lived a life of fervent devotion in some of the forests in the Tamil land by the side of the rivers Tāmraparṇī and Kāveri and who in all probabi-

1. Winternitz 'A History of Indian Literature.' p. 556.
2. Morgan 'The Religion of the Hindus' p. 38.

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lity may have lived with the Vaiṣṇava poet singers called the Ālvārs. This view has some weight behind it. The Ālvārs of the South are supposed to have flourished from about the third to the ninth century A. D. Traditionally they are also believed to be the descendants of those brāhmins of the Bhāgavata faitų who migrated southwards at the close of the first century A. D. The writings of the Ālvārs, with the sole object of the spread of the Vaiṣṇava faith, has much in common with the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, which probably is one of the reasons for the growing opinion among scholars of its authorship in the South. There are some verses in the Bhāgavata itself which indicate a southern origin :—"Men born in Kṛta, Treta and Dvāpara ages wished to take birth in the Kali age because they knew that in this age would be born great souls devoted to Nārāyaṇa. These souls would be thinly scattered in various places, but in the Drāvida land they would be found in some numbers, living by the side of such rivers as the Tāmraparṇī, Kṛtamālā, Payasvinī and Kāverī the holy'[1].

There is another reference to the Drāvida country in the fourth skandha.[2] Here it is said that a daughter of Rājasimha of Vidarbha was married to Malayadhvaja, king of the Pāndyas and from them were born seven sons who became founders of the seven Dravidian kingly lines. This shows the author's familiarity with the Drāvida country.

In the eighth skandha the legendary elephant king is described as having been in his former birth "Indradyumna, king

1. कृतादिषु प्रजा राजन् कलाविच्छन्ति संभवम् ।
कलौ खलु भविष्यन्ति नारायणपरायणाः ॥
क्वचित् क्वचिद् महाराज द्रविडेषु च भूरिशः ।
ताम्रपर्णी नदी यत्र कृतमाला पयस्विनी ॥
कावेरी च महापुण्या प्रतीची च महानदी ।
ये पिबन्ति जलं तासां मनुजा मनुजेश्वर ॥
प्रायो भक्ता भगवति वासुदेवेऽमलाशयाः ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 5. 38–40.
2. तस्यां स जनयाञ्चक्र आत्मजामसितेक्षणाम् ।
यवीयसः सप्त सुतान् सप्त द्रविडभूभृतः ॥
एकैकस्याभवत्तेषां राजन्नर्बुदमर्बुदम् ।
भोक्ष्यते यद्वंशधरैर्मही मन्वन्तरं परम् ॥ Ibid, IV. 28. 30–31.

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of the Pāndya country, the most holy man of his age in Drāvida land."[1]

It is also significant that in describing the hills and rivers of India[2] the author begins with an enumeration of the hills and rivers of the South.

There is frequent mention of the word gopura which is less familiar in the north than in the south.

Before entering into a discussion of the date of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it has to be ascertained whether the Bhāgavata mentioned in the list of Purāṇas denotes this Śrīmad Bhāgavata (Vaiṣṇava) or the Devī Bhāgavata or again the Kālika Purāṇa.

The authors of the Nibandhas are all in favour of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. The verses quoted from the Bhāgavata by Ballālasena, Madhvācārya, Govindānanda, Raghunandana, Gopālabhatta and others are very often found in the present Bhāgavata but not in the Devībhāgavata. "The Kālika has been quoted by Aparārka, Ballālasena, Madhva, Madanapāla, Śūlapāṇi, Govindānanda, Raghunandana and others with the express mention of its well known title."

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavata there is no mention of the Devībhāgavata but in the Devībhāgavata[3] the Bhāgavata has been mentioned as an Upapurāṇa obviously with a view to "establishing its own claim to the position of a Mahāpurāṇa".

Abhinavagupta of the Dhvani School clearly understands the Śrīmad Bhāgavata as the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as he cites quotations from this Purāṇa and not the Devībhāgavata. The description of the Bhāgavata given in the Bṛhannāradīya Purāṇa also points to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata and not the Devī Bhāgavata.

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1. स वै पूर्वमभूद् राजा पाण्ड्यो द्रविडसत्तमः ।
इन्द्रद्युम्न इति ख्यातो विष्णुव्रतपरायणः ॥ Bhā. P. VIII. 4. 7.
2. Ibid. V. 19.
3. माहेश्वरं भागवतं वासिष्ठं च सविस्तरम् । एतान्युपपुराणानि कथितानि महात्मभिः ॥ Devi. Bhā. I. 2. 16.

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As to the date of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is usually said that it must be later than Rāmānuja as Rāmānuja does not mention this Purāṇa in any of his works. Now the non-mention of the Purāṇa by Rāmānuja is only a negative evidence and not a positive one. It is just a whim on the part of an author to mention some particular work or not. Hiuen Tsang for instance did not translate the well known Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda but Guṇacandra's text book on the Vaiśeṣika system. So also he omits to mention the Nyāyasūtras of Gautama though citing a number of Nyāya works. The Yoga śāstra also is mentioned by him but strangely enough the Yoga sūtras of Patañjali are omitted.

Rāmānuja does accord the first place to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Sudarśana Sūri mentions the reasons for Rāmānuja's partiality to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.[1] One of the reasons is its absence of brevity and also its narration in the form of questions and answers. The metaphysical standpoint of the Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas is also identical—hence Rāmānuja did not want to unnecessarily duplicate texts.

Mr. C. V. Vaidya is of the opinion that the mention of Buddha as an avatāra in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa points to a date long after Śankara. This does not necessarily follow. In the Mahābhārata Mokṣadharma section[2] Buddha is clearly mentioned as an avatāra and in any case cannot be later than the fifth century or beginning of the sixth century A. D. (500 A. D.) since the Mahābhārata in its present form is known to

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1. एवं प्रसिद्ध्यातिशयलब्धसजातीयप्रबन्धातिशयत्वात्, तत एव नष्टकोशत्वाभावात्, अतिविस्तृतया प्रक्षेपशङ्कारहितत्वात्, अन्यपरोक्तिसिद्धपरिग्रहातिशयत्वात्, सामान्यप्रश्नपूर्वप्रतिवचनरूपत्वेन अनाग्रहमूलत्वात् अत एव ईदृशवैलक्षण्यरहित, करुणदोष, बाधकप्रत्यय-स्वव्याहतिमत्प्रबन्धान्तराणां एतद्विरोधे सति दौर्बल्यस्या वर्जनीयत्वाच्च श्रीमद्वैष्णवं इदं पुराणं प्रमाणतमम् ॥
2. ततः कलियुगस्यादौ द्विजराजतरुं श्रितः ।
भीषया मागधेनैव धर्मराजगृहे वसन् ॥
काषायवस्त्रसंवीतो मुण्डितः शुक्लदन्तवान् ।
शुद्धोदनसुतो बुद्धो मोहयिष्यामि मानवान् ॥
MBH (Kumbha. Ed.) Moksa. 348. 42–43.

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have existed by then. In Śaṅkara's commentary on Gītā III. I he quotes a pasage from the Mokṣadharma Section[1] with the remark 'itiśukānuśāsanam'. This passage occurs in a speech by Śuka. Moreover in the Śāntiparva also[2] there is mention of Buddha as an avatāra.

Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya on the Brahmasūtra[3] refers to the deceitful campaign of Buddha, as Ānandagiri, the commentator, mentions.[4]

Thus Śaṅkara was familiar with the deification of Buddha and hence the mention of Buddha as an avatāra in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa need not mean that the Purāṇa is later than Śaṅkara.

Abhinavagupta, the champion of the Dhvani school, who lived during the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century A. D., knew the Bhāgavata Purāṇa very well to which he refers and from which he quotes passages in his commentary on the Gītā. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa must therefore be earlier than the tenth century A. D.

If we accept the author of the Purāṇa to be a South Indian then it would have taken at least some centuries for the work to win its way to North India and command such authority in the tenth century, i. e. the date of Abhinavagupta.

Gaudapāda's commentary on the Uttaragītā contains a quotation from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa to which he refers by

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1. कर्मणा बध्यते जन्तुर्विद्यया च विमुच्यते।
   तस्मात्कर्म न कुर्वन्ति यतयः पारदर्शिनः॥
2. मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहश्च नारसिंहोऽथ वामनः।
   रामो रामश्च रामश्च बुद्धः कल्कीति ते दश॥ MBH. XII. 348. 2.
3. अपि च बाह्यार्थविज्ञानशून्यवादत्रयमितरेतरविरुद्धमुपदिशता सुगतेन स्पष्टीकृतमात्मनोऽसंबद्धप्रलापित्वं, प्रद्वेषो वा प्रजासु विरुद्धार्थप्रतिपत्त्या विमुह्येयुरिमाः प्रजा इति॥
   Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya II. 2. 32. p. 558 (Nirṇaya Sāgara Press)
4. सर्वज्ञस्य भगवतो वासुदेवस्य इतिहासपुराणयोः बुद्धत्वप्रसिद्धेः, तस्यासंबद्धप्रलापित्वमयुक्तमित्याशङ्क्याह—प्रद्वेषो वेति। Ānandagiri's gloss on Śankara's Bhāṣya p. 479 (Nirṇayasāgara Press).

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name.[1] The quotation has been identified with Bhāgavata Purāṇa X. 14. 4.[2] Gaudapāda flourished in the seventh century A. D. and hence the Purāṇa should be at least a century earlier.

Two verses of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa occur in the "Māṭhara Vṛtti, regarded as the original of the Gaudapāda Vṛtti on the Sāṅkhya kārikas of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa." The source of the quotations is unnamed but they correspond to I. 8. 52 and I. 6. 35 of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.[3] "The Māṭhara Vṛtti is known to have been translated into Chinese by Paramārtha between 557–569 A. D. and is assumed to be as early as 450 samvat". The translation of Paramārtha's work into French and later into English do not contain these verses—but this does not rule out their existence in the original Māṭhara Vṛtti for it is admitted that Paramārtha's was not a strictly literal and faithful translation of the Māṭhara.

Thus it is clear that by the tenth century A. D. the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was well known and it did certainly exist in the seventh century A. D. The Māṭhara Vṛtti translation shows that it was known in the sixth century A. D. and therefore could have been composed about the fifth century A. D. We can thus conclude that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was in existence about the fifth century A. D.

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1. तदुक्तं भागवते :—
   तेषामसौ क्लेश एव शिष्यते । नान्यद्यथा स्थूलतुषावघातिनाम् ॥
   Commentary on Uttaragīta II. 46.
2. श्रेयःश्रुतिं भक्तिमुदस्य ते विभो । क्लिश्यन्ति ये केवलबोधलब्धये ॥
   तेषामसौ क्लेशल एव शिष्यते । नान्यद् यथा स्थूलतुषावघातिनाम् ॥
   Bhā. P. X. 14. 4.
3. यथा पङ्केन पङ्काम्भः सुरया वा सुराकृतम् ।
   भूतहत्यां तथैवेमां न यज्ञैर्मार्ष्टुमर्हति ॥
   Māthara Vṛtti p. 8. under Kārika 2.
   Cf. यथा पङ्केन पङ्काम्भः सुरया वा सुराकृतम् ।
   भूतहत्यां तथैवैकां न यज्ञैर्मार्ष्टुमर्हति ॥ Bhā. P. I. 8. 52.

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CHAPTER II

A Review of the Contents of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

As with all sacred texts of the Hindus the Bhāgavata Purāṇa begins with meditation on the Supreme Being.[1] After that we are told how the sages assembled at Naimiṣāraṇya meet Sūta and request him to narrate the glories of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sūta begins with a lengthy discourse on the merits of listening to the Lord's glory and then we get a sweeping enumeration of the different avatāras of Bhagavān. The way in which Nārada induced Veda Vyāsa to write the Bhāgavata is described in a charming conversation between the two wherein it is said that the 'Narration of the Lord's doings has been found to be a veritable raft to cross the ocean of mundane existence for those whose mind is incessantly tormented by the craving for sense enjoyment.[2]

As an introduction to the exploits of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the story of king Parīkṣit is told. We have a long description of how Parīkṣit was protected in his mother's womb from the Brahmāstra released by Aśvathāma.

After that we listen to a speech by Bhīṣma in praise of the Lord. Bhīṣma is on his bed of arrows waiting for the auspicious moment to give up his mortal coil when Yudhiṣṭhira and others with Śrī Kṛṣṇa call on him. Bhīṣma's joy in being able to be near Bhagavān during his last moments is indescribable and he joyfully gives up his mortal coil.

His work being over Śrī Kṛṣṇa departs to Dvāraka where he is received with great joy and rejoicing.

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1. जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट् ।
तेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुह्यन्ति यत्सूरयः ॥
तेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा ।
धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि ॥ Bhā. P. I. 1. 1.

2. एतद्व्याहुरचित्तानां मात्रास्पर्शेच्छया मुहुः । भवसिन्धुप्लवो दृष्टो हरिचर्यानुवर्णनम् ॥
Bhā. P. I. 6.35.

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The birth of Parīkṣit and the horse sacrifice performed by Yudhiṣthira are the other main events narrated in the first skandha. Parīkṣit gradually grew up into a strong and able prince. Meanwhile Vidura who had gone on a pilgrimage returned to Hastināpura after having learnt the truth about the spirit from Maitreya. He then pointed out to the aging Dhṛtarāṣtra the futility of existence and told him that only he is considered as foremost among men, who drops this mortal coil free from worldly attachment and shaking off all bondage.* Thus instructed by Vidura king Dhṛtarāṣtra started for the Himālaya regions accompanied by his faithful wife Gāndhārī, without the knowledge of Yudhiṣthira. Vidura himself acted as the guide. In the Mahābhārata, however, it is mentioned that Kuntī also went with Dhṛtarāṣtra and Gāndhārī, while in the Bhāgavata no mention of Kuntī is made.

When Yudhiṣthira found his uncles and aunt missing he was filled with sorrow and questioned Sañjaya about their whereabouts. But Sañjaya was also ignorant about Dhṛtarāṣtra's departure. At that moment the divine sage Nārada came there to the great relief of Yudhiṣthira and enlightened him on his uncle's action. He also predicted the death of Dhṛtarāṣtra and Gāndhārī within a few days and after consoling Yudhiṣthira he departed.

Now we come to a sad part of the story, wherein is described the destruction of the Yādavas by mutual conflict and the disappearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the world. Arjuna, who was sent by Yudhiṣthira to Dvāraka, came back with the sad news of Kṛṣṇa's death and the extermination of the Yadu race. And here it is mentioned that the Kali age commenced on that very day when Lord Kṛṣṇa departed from this earth.[1]

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* गतस्वार्थमिदं देहं विरक्तो मुक्तबन्धनः।
अविज्ञातगतिर्जह्यात् स वै धीर उदाहृतः॥ Ibid. I. 13. 25.

1. यदा मुकुन्दो भगवानिमां महीं जहौ स्वतन्वा श्रवणीयसत्कथः।
तदाहरेवाप्रतिबुद्धचेतसामधर्महेतुः कलिरन्ववर्तत॥
Ibid. I. 15. 36.

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The news of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's end determined Yudhiṣṭhira's action. After having installed Parīkṣit on the throne at Hastināpura, and Vajra (son of Aniruddha) at Mathurā, he became a recluse. Having abandoned all desires and concentrating on the Supreme Brahman he took the path towards the North, followed by his brothers. Finally they all attained the lotus feet of the Lord and so did Kuntī, Vidura and Draupadī.

In an interesting dialogue between Kali and Parīkṣit it is narrated how the king allocated to Kali five places of residence, which he might occupy without fearing chastisement. They are the following : dice, wine, woman, shambles and gold.[1]

On one occasion king Parīkṣit went out hunting and feeling thirsty and hungry entered the hermitage of sage Śamīka. The sage was sitting still with his eyes closed in deep meditation, quite oblivious of the king's presence. Mistaking his silence for disrespect the king departed indignantly after throwing with the end of his bow a dead serpent across the shoulder of the brahman sage. The sage's son heard of this insult to his father and though a mere boy, he cursed the king by virtue of his spiritual glory. According to the curse king Parīkṣit was to die on the seventh day hence, bitten by Takṣaka, the chief of the serpents.

Parīkṣit heard of the curse and at once repaired to the banks of the Ganges with a vow to fast unto death. Here, on the river bank, many sages assembled and among them was Śuka, the son of Vyāsa. King Parīkṣit took this opportunity to ask Śuka two questions of vital importance and the following eleven skandhas of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa constitute the answer to those two questions. The questions asked by Parīkṣit were : 'What should a man do under all circumstances

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1. अभ्यर्थितस्तदा तस्मै स्थानानि कलये ददौ ।
द्यूतं पानं स्त्रियः सूना यत्राधर्मश्चतुर्विधः ॥
पुनश्च याचमानाय जातरूपमदात् प्रभुः ।
ततोऽनृतं मदं कामं रजो वैरं च पञ्चमम् ॥ Ibid. I. 17. 38-9

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and at all times ? and what is the duty of a man who is about to die ?* With these questions the first skandha comes to an end.

Second Skandha

Śuka in answer to Parīkṣit's questions states that concentration on the Supreme Brahman is the duty of a man under all circumstances and conditions. As for a man who is about to die Śuka says that he should give up all fear of death and develop an attitude of detachment towards all likes and dislikes. He should give up all his possessions like his house, children etc., and make for himself an āsana in a solitary place. Then he should meditate on the three-lettered 'OM' with perseverence disregarding the distractions caused by the qualities of Rajas and Tamas.

The next question of Parīkṣit is a common man's question and arises in everyone's mind. The question is 'What kind of concentration speedily takes one to the Supreme Being and on what object should it be practised.[1]

Śuka in his reply states that concentration on the sthūla (gross) aspect of Bhagavān with a fully controlled mind is the first step to bliss.[2] He then goes on to describe the sthūla (gross) aspect called the Virāt—Puruṣa or Mahāpuruṣa.' The present, the past and the future are manifest in that aspect. The Virāt Puruṣa is the soul of an Egg-like body with a seven fold cover of earth, water, fire, air, ākāśa, ahaṁkāra and mahat.

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* अतः पृच्छामि संसिद्धिं योगिनां परमं गुरुम् ।
पुरुषस्येह यत् कार्यं म्रियमाणस्य सर्वथा ॥
यच्छ्रोतव्यमथो जप्यं यत् कर्तव्यं नृभिः प्रभो ।
स्मर्तव्यं भजनीयं वा ब्रूहि यद् वा विपर्ययम् ॥
Ibid. I. 19. 36—7.

1. यथा संधार्यते ब्रह्मन् धारणा यत्र सम्मता ।
यादृशी वा हरेदाशु पुरुषस्य मनोमलम् ॥ Ibid. II. 1. 22.
2. जितासनो जितश्वासो जितसङ्गो जितेन्द्रियः ।
स्थूले भगवतो रूपे मनः संधारयेद् धिया ॥ Ibid. II. 1. 23.

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The Virāt Puruṣa

Pātāla is His feet, Rasātala His heels, Mahātala His ankles, Talātala His legs, Sutala His knees, Vitala—the lower portion of His thighs, and Atala—the upper portion. Thus also the seven upper regions like Bhūrloka, Bhuvarloka, Svarloka, etc., are described as constituting His loins, navel, breast, throat, mouth, forehead and head. And thus the description goes on, everything being mentioned as a part of the Virāt-Puruṣa. Thus the trees are the hairs of Mahā-Puruṣa, the powerful wind god His breath, twilight His clothing, the moon His manas etc., etc., The Virāt Puruṣa in the Bhāgavata can be compared to the Puruṣa in the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Ṛgveda and to the Viśvarūpa described in the Gītā.

When the mind is sufficiently fixed by concentration on the Virāt Puruṣa, the next step is to meditate on the Puruṣa in the heart.

Some people fix their mind through meditation on the Lord with four arms, (bearing severally a lotus, a discus, a conch and a mace) residing in the cavity of their heart within their own body in a form as big as a thumb in height.* The devotee should continue to gaze on this conceptual image of the Lord and try to grasp every limb in thought and then proceed to the next higher.

Death of a Yogī

The death of a Yogī is next described and the description carries the conviction that the author of the Bhāgavata must have been a great yogī. Śuka narrates how a Yogin whose desires have all been controlled will drop his body : The Yogī sits in a proper posture, pressing his feet against the anus and perseveringly draws the vital air upwards to the six centres. He draws the air in the navel centre (maṇipura) to the cardiac plexus, thence to the plexus beneath the throat, (viśuddhi) thence gradually by intuition to the root of the palate.

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* केचित् स्वदेहान्तर्हृदयावकाशे प्रादेशमात्रं पुरुषं वसन्तम् ।
चतुर्भुजं कञ्जरथाङ्गशङ्खगदाधरं धारणया स्मरन्ति ॥ Ibid. II. 2. 8.

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Thence he takes the vital air to Ajña-cakra which is situated between the two eye brows. He then controls the seven holes, (ears, eyes, nostrils and the mouth). He now looks steadily for half a muhūrta and if he has not a trace of desire left in him, he gives up the body and the indriyas, passes out through the Brahma-randhra and attains the state of Viṣṇu.[1]

Parīkṣit next asks Śuka—"How did Bhagavān create this universe, how does He preserve it and how will He draw it in ? What are His śaktis and what are His actions ?" These were the very questions which Nārada asked Brahmā once upon a time. In Brahmā's reply is embodied the Purāṇic conception of creation.

Creation.

Intent on becoming many the Lord of Māyā influenced Kāla, Karman and Svabhāva by His own Māyā. Under the influence of Puruṣa, Time disturbed the equilibrium of the three guṇas, Svabhāva transformed them and from Karma was evolved Mahat, (the principle of cosmic intelligence). When Rajas and Tamas manifest themselves in Mahat tattva, it is transformed into Ahaṅkāra tattva with predominant Tamas. Ahaṅkāra tattva by transformation becomes three fold—Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa. In other words they are known as Jñāna-śakti, (power to produce the Devas), Kriyāśakti, (power to produce the Indriyas), and Dravyaśakti (power to produce the Bhūtas) respectively.

From the Tāmasa Ahaṅkāra evolved first ākāśa (ether). Then ākāśa was transformed into Vāyu, Vāyu into Agni, Agni into Āp and Āp into Pṛthivī. Rājasa Ahaṅkāra was transformed into the ten Indriyas. From Sāttvika-Ahaṅkāra evolved manas and ten Vaikārika Devas. The following table represents the evolution more clearly and is borrowed from 'Esoteric Hinduism' by Purnendu Sinha.

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1 तस्माद् भ्रुवोरन्तरमुन्नयेत निरुद्धसप्तायतनोऽनपेक्षः ।
स्थित्वा मुहूर्तार्धमकुण्ठदृष्टिर्निर्भिद्य मूर्धन् विसृजेत् परं गतः ॥

Ibid. II. 2. 21.

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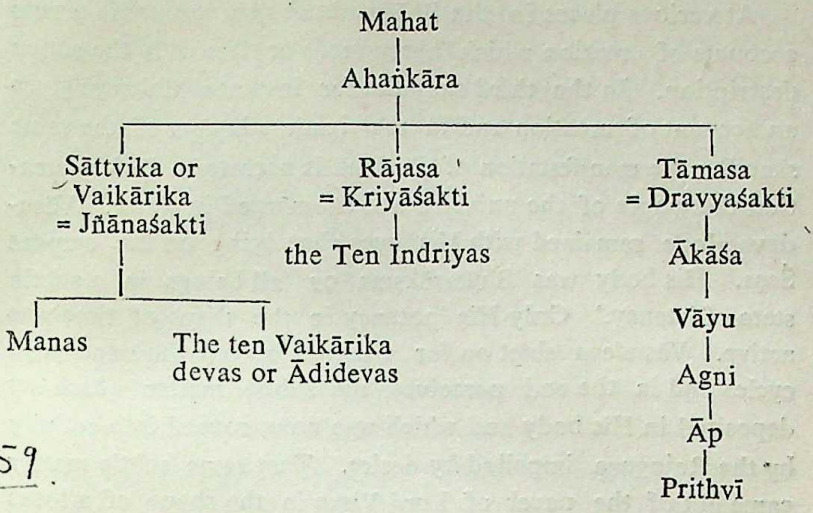

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The above creation is called the Kāraṇa-creation. But these could not unite and further the process of creation. So the Śakti of Bhagavān entered them and the cosmic egg (Brahmāṇḍa) was formed. The egg lay on the causal waters in a lifeless condition for a thousand years. At the end of this period Puruṣa influenced Kāla, Karman and Svabhāva to infuse life into the egg. Then from the egg there issued forth this same Puruṣa with thousands of heads and thousands of limbs and is known as the Virāt-Puruṣa. It is in His limbs that the wise locate the various worlds—the seven lower spheres below His waist and the seven higher spheres above His hip and loins. This Puruṣa is the first avatāra, the Ādipuruṣa, who creates, preserves and destroys.[1] Creation as proceeding from an egg is almost an universal myth and is to be found in Babylonian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Persian and Greek mythologies. According to the Greeks in the orphic cosmogony a huge egg was produced by Chronos and Adrastea which divided itself into two. With the upper half the sky was formed and with the lower the earth. Out of the egg itself came the shining God Phanes who contained within Him the germs of all the other gods.

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1 एष ह्यशेषसत्त्वानामात्मांशः परमात्मनः ।
आद्योऽवतारो यत्रासौ भूतग्रामो विभाव्यते ॥ Ibid. III. 6. 8.

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At various places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across accounts of creation which agree more or less with the above description. In the third skandha for instance Maitreya gives an account of creation and in the eighth adhyāya of the same skandha the manifestation of Brahmā is narrated. Before creation the whole of the universe was submerged in water. Vāsudeva alone remained with His eyes shut lying on the serpent Śeṣa. His body was Bhūtasūkṣma or 'all beings in a subtle state of latency.' Only His potency in the shape of time was active. Vāsudeva slept on for a period of one thousand yuga cycles and in the end perceived the subtle matter which lay deposited in His body and which was now roused into activity by the Rajoguṇa impelled by desire. That same subtle matter came out of the navel of Lord Viṣṇu in the shape of a lotus bud.[1] Viṣṇu entered this Loka-Padma and Brahmā appeared in the lotus. In order to discover the lokas Brahmā looked on all sides and became four-faced ; but he did not know the cause of the lotus. Confused as to his origin and the appearance of the lotus Brahmā tried to find out the base of the lotus stalk. But the search was in vain. Finally Brahmā decided to practise yoga. After a hundred years of strenuous yoga he saw revealed in his heart, of its own accord, that Truth which he had failed to perceive before. Brahmā prayed to that Truth (Puruṣa) and was asked to practise tapas for acquiring the power of creation.

The 10th, 12th, 20th and 26th adhyāyas of the third skandha also have something to say about creation and there are references to it in other skandhas as well.

Comparison with Sāṅkhyan theory of creation.

A glance at the creation accounts shows that they have much in common with the Sāṅkhyan theory of creation. But the account of Sānkhya which the Bhāgavata Purāṇa gives is somewhat different from the account we get in classical Sānkhya works like Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sānkhyakārikas. According

1 स पद्मकोशः सहसोदतिष्ठत् कालेन कर्म प्रतिबोधनेन ।
स्वरोचिषा तत् सलिलं विशालं विद्योतयन्नर्क इवात्मयोनिः ॥

Ibid. III. 8. 14.

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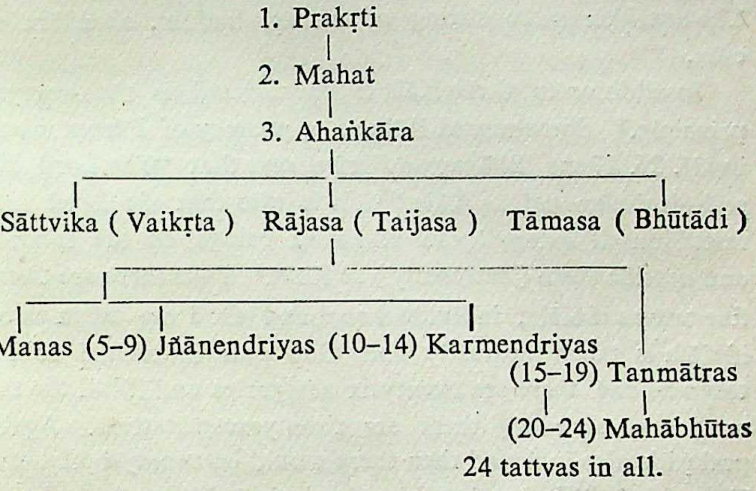
to the classical account, creation proceeds from prakṛti when the equilibrium of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) in prakṛti is disturbed by the proximity of Puruṣa. From Prakṛti evolve in gradual succession the twentythree tattvas and together with Prakṛti constitute the twentyfour tattvas of the Sāṅkhya system as shown below. If Puruṣa is included then there are twentyfive tattvas in the classical Sāṅkhya.



In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the evolution of the tattvas is described in the third skandha as follows —Puruṣa is Ātman and He is beyond prakṛti, eternal, void of guṇas, all-pervading and self-luminous. This Puruṣa accepts playfully the unmanifest divine prakṛti that sought Him of her own accord.[1] Puruṣa saw prakṛti evolving through her guṇas projeny of various kinds and Himself fell prey to the veiling power of ignorance.[2] By falsely identifying Himself with prakṛti "Puruṣa conceives Itself to be the agent in the changes that take place by the natural movement of the guṇas of prakṛti and hence It exposes Itself to repeated births and becomes bound by the laws of

1. अनादिरात्मा पुरुषो निर्गुणः प्रकृतेः परः ।
प्रत्यग्धामा स्वयंज्योतिर्विश्वं येन समन्वितम् ॥
स एष प्रकृतिं सूक्ष्मां दैवीं गुणमयीं विभुः ।
यदृच्छयैवोपगतामभ्यपद्यत लीलया ॥ Ibid. III. 26. 3–4

2. गुणैर्विचित्राः सृजतीं सरूपाः प्रकृतिं प्रजाः ।
विलोक्य मुमुहे सद्यः स इह ज्ञानगूहया ॥ Ibid. III. 26. 5.

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karma."[1] Prakṛti in reality is the cause and agent of all "its own self-abiding effects" and Puruṣa is only the passive enjoyer of all pleasures and pain. The transformations of prakṛti are :—

Five Mahābhūtas—earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Five Tanmātras—smell, taste, colour, touch and sound.

Ten Indriyas—ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose, speech, hand, foot, upastha and pāyu.

The antaḥkaraṇa consisting of manas, buddhi, ahaṅkāra and citta.

In addition to these Kāla is enumerated as the twentyfifth principle.[2] Some regard Kāla as a potency of Puruṣa whereas in III. 26. 17 the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says that "The Lord Himself—is designated as Kāla."[3] It is said that the Lord manifests Himself internally in all living beings as the inner self and outside them (externally) as Kāla.[4] Thus there are twenty-five tattvas if Kāla, individual soul and God are taken as one, if Kāla is taken separately and God and individual soul are taken as one there are twentysix categories and if all the three are taken separately there are twentyseven tattvas. Again if prakṛti is also included then there would be twentyeight tattvas. Thus this is different from the classical Sānkhya.

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we notice that the equilibrium of prakṛti is disturbed not because of the proximity of Puruṣa as in the classical Sānkhya. It is Kāla that upsets the equilibrium of the guṇas in prakṛti. Thus in the second skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is related how the Lord was alone in the beginning. Then intent upon becoming many He disturbed the

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1. एवं पराभिध्यानेन कर्तृत्वं प्रकृतेः पुमान्।
कर्मसु क्रियमाणेषु गुणैरात्मनि मन्यते॥
तदस्यसंसृतिर्बन्धः पारतन्त्र्यं च तत्कृतम्।
भवत्यकर्तुरीशस्य साक्षिणो निर्वृतात्मनः॥ Ibid. III. 26. 6–7.
2. एतावानेव संख्यातो ब्रह्मणः सगुणस्य ह।
संनिवेशो मया प्रोक्तो यः कालः पञ्चविंशकः॥ Ibid. III. 26. 15.
3. प्रकृतेर्गुणसाम्यस्य निर्विशेषस्य मानवि।
चेष्टा यतः स भगवान् काल इत्युपलक्षितः॥ Ibid. III. 26. 17.
4. अन्तः पुरुषरूपेण कालरूपेण यो बहिः।
समन्वेत्येष सत्त्वानां भगवानात्ममायया॥ Ibid. III. 26–18.

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equilibrium of the three guṇas through Kāla, transformed them through Svabhāva and thus creation started.[1] In the third skandha it is again said that the Lord was all alone to begin with.[2] Then he disturbed the equilibrium of His māyā through Kāla and the process of creation began with the evolution of the mahat tattva.

From these different accounts we find that the Purāṇa lays stress on two fundamental tattvas—God and his Māyā which is also known as prakṛti. God, with a desire to become many reflects Himself in prakṛti or māyā (which is His own power or energy) and "it is through this impregnation of Himself in His own power that He appears as individual souls suffering the bondage of prakṛti ;" through this impregnation of Himself, prakṛti is endowed with consciousness and then through His creative effort called Kāla (Time) the equilibrium of the guṇas is disturbed, the transformation is set up and the various tattvas are evolved in succession.

The most important difference between 'the Bhāgavata school of Sāṅkhya' and that of the classical account is that the former admits only one Puruṣa as the real essence. "The individual phenomenal selves appear as real entities only by the delusive confusion of the universal Puruṣa with the transformations of prakṛti and by the consequent false attribution of the movements and phenomena of prakṛti to this universal Puruṣa." The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, as has been already stated

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1. कालाद् गुणव्यतिकरः परिणामः स्वभावतः ।
कर्मणो जन्म महतः पुरुषाधिष्ठितादभूत् ॥ Ibid. II. 5. 22.

2. भगवानेक आसेदमग्र आत्माऽऽत्मनां विभुः ।
आत्मेच्छानुगतावात्मानानामल्युपलक्षणः ॥
स वा एष तदा द्रष्टा नापश्यद् दृश्यमेकराट् ।
मेनेऽसन्तमिवात्मानं सुप्तशक्तिरसुप्तदृक् ॥
स वा एतस्य संद्रष्टुः शक्तिः सदसदात्मिका ।
माया नाम महाभाग ययेदं निर्ममे विभुः ॥
कालवृत्त्या तु मायायां गुणमय्यामधोक्षजः ।
पुरुषेणात्मभूतेन वीर्यमाधत्त वीर्यवान् ॥
ततोऽभवन्महत्तत्वमव्यक्तात् कालचोदितात् ।
विज्ञानात्माऽऽत्मदेहस्थं विश्वं व्यञ्जंस्तमोनुदः ॥ Ibid. III. 5. 23–27.

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in the first chapter, stands nearer to Śaṅkara's system of philosophy than to the realistic system of Kapila's philosophy. Thus in this Purāṇa we find what may be called a 'Monistic Sāṅkhya.' In the eleventh skandha, for instance, it is said that the ultimate reality is one and all differences are just differences of name and form.[1] In fact the opening verse of the Purāṇa itself (according to one of its prominent and direct interpretations) relates that creation through guṇas is false and yet, on account of the all-pervading reality that underlies it, it appears as real; "that the production, maintenance and destruction of the universe all proceed from the ultimate reality Brahman and that it is through the light of this reality that all darkness vanishes." Again in the sixth skandha it is said that Brahman is beyond the guṇas and whatever there is in the world has Brahman as its cause and that He is the only reality.[2]

Mention of the Avatāras.

We next come to a brief description of the various avatāras of Bhagavān.

Puruṣa assumed the form of a Varāha in order to raise the

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1 ……ब्रह्माणमग्रतः कृत्वा पप्रच्छुः को भवानिति ॥
इत्यहं मुनिभिः पृष्टस्तत्त्वजिज्ञासुभिस्तदा ।
यदवोचमहं तेभ्यस्तदुद्धव निबोध मे ॥
वस्तुनो यद्यनानात्वमात्मनः प्रश्न ईदृशः ।
कथं घटेत वो विप्रा वक्तुर्वा मे क आश्रयः ॥
पञ्चात्मकेषु भूतेषु समानेषु च वस्तुतः ।
को भवानिति वः प्रश्नो वाचारम्भो ह्यनर्थकः ॥
मनसा वचसा दृष्ट्या गृह्यतेऽन्यैरपीन्द्रियैः ।
अहमेव न मत्तोऽन्यदिति बुध्यध्वमञ्जसा ॥ Ibid. XI. 13. 20–4.

2 यद् यन्निरुक्तं वचसा निरूपितं धियाक्षभिर्वा मनसा वोत यस्य ।
मा भूत् स्वरूपं गुणरूपं हि तत् तत् स वै गुणापायविसर्गलक्षणः ॥
यस्मिन् यतो येन च यस्य यस्मै यद् यो यथा कुरुते कार्यते च ।
परावरेषां परमं प्राक् प्रसिद्धं तद् ब्रह्म तद्धेतुरनन्यदेकम् ॥
यच्छक्तयो वदतां वादिनां वै विवादसंवादभुवो भवन्ति ।
कुर्वन्ति चैषां मुहुरात्ममोहं तस्मै नमोऽनन्तगुणाय भूम्ने ॥
अस्तीति नास्तीति च वस्तुनिष्ठयोरेकस्थयोर्भिन्नविरुद्धधर्मयोः ।
अवेक्षितं किंचन योगसांख्ययोः समं परं ह्यनुकूलं बृहत् तत् ॥
Ibid. VI. 4. 29–32.

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earth from the waters. The earliest reference to the Varāhāvatāra is found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa in connection with Brahmā.

Next He was born as Yajña to Ruci and Ākūtī. The Suyama devas were born of Yajña, who removed the fears of the three worlds.

Then He was born as the son of Kardama and Devahūti and was called Kapila, the propounder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy.

As Dattātreya He preached Yoga to His disciples who acquired superhuman powers and were liberated.

In the forms of the four Kumāras, Ātmavidya which was lost in pralaya was renewed or refound.

Nara and Nārāyaṇa were born of Dharma and Mūrti. Their tapas was strenuous and unsurpassed.

Dhruva, the child avatāra who went to the forest and performed severe penance there, is a household name in India. He is immortalized in the Dhruvanakṣatra. (Pole Star).

As Prithu, Bhagavān milked out riches and edibles from the earth.

He was born as Ṛṣabha to king Nābhi and his wife Sudevī. Ṛṣabha roamed about as a paramahamsa. Ṛṣabha is mentioned as the first tīrthaṅkara in Jainism. An account of the various tīrthaṅkaras is given while dealing with the fifth skandha.

Hayagrīva, the horse-headed avatāra, appeared in the Vedic Yajña and brought forth the Vedas. This only confirms the age old belief in the holiness of the Vedas.

The Matsyāvatāra was intended to help Manu, together with the objects he could collect in his boat, survive the Deluge. The earliest reference to the Matsyāvatāra is found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

In the form of a tortoise Bhagavān supported the Mandara mountain at the churning of the Milk Ocean.

The Nṛsimhāvatāra served to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu.

As Hari He saved the elephant king and in the form of a

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dwarf (Vāmana) He rid the earth of Bali, the demon. The three steps of Viṣṇu mentioned in the Viṣṇu Sūkta of the Ṛgveda are supposed to have given rise to the Vāmanāvatāra in later times.

In the various manvantaras the Lord preserves the race of the Manus.

Descending as Dhanvantari, He promulgated the science of medicine, and as Paraśurāma He was responsible for the supression of the Kṣatriyas who became disregardful of the brāhmans and the śāstras. The Paraśurāma legend has been discussed in the third chapter of the thesis.

As Dāśarathi Rāma He killed Rāvaṇa.

Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the other avatāras and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa deals exhaustively with them.

Vyāsa, the sage who divided and arranged the Vedas is another avatāra.

When the Asuras came to know the Vedic mysteries and started oppressing people, Bhagavān descended as Buddha in order to confound them by preaching a variety of religions. Such statements are found in most of the post-Buddhistic Hindu scriptures, their main purpose being to wean away people from the influence of Buddhism. Buddha was thus converted into an avatāra of Viṣṇu so that those who followed his system of thought could be, by slight readjustments, brought back to the fold of Hinduism. In recognising Buddha as an avatāra of Viṣṇu and giving him such a status the genius of Hindu religion to absorb antagonistic beliefs is clearly illustrated.

And lastly it is said that the Lord will appear as Kalki before the end of the Kali Age in order to set things right.

Besides the above, some more avatāras are enumerated during the different stages of creation, preservation and destruction. Thus in creation they are tapas, Brahmā, the Ṛṣis and the nine Prajāpatis. In preservation they are Dharma, Viṣṇu, Manu, devas and kings. In destruction they are Adharma, Śiva, serpents and asuras.

This was in brief what Brahmā told Nārada and it is the

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Bhāgavata Purāṇa in summary. Brahmā then exhorted Nārada to relate it to others in an expanded form.[1]

In the last adhyāya of the second skandha it is stated that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa discusses ten topics i.e. sarga, visarga, sthāna, poṣaṇa, manvantara, ūti, īśānukathā, nirodha, mukti and āśraya. These topics are discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.

The third Skandha

The third skandha is related by Maitreya to Vidura in answer to certain questions. Vidura was one of the few men who did not take part in the Mahābhārata war. He went on a long pilgrimage visiting various holy places and met Uddhava near the Jamunā. From him he learned about the victory of the Pāṇḍavas and of the end of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas. Uddhava instructed Vidura to go to Maitreya in order to learn the Supreme Truth. Accordingly Vidura went to Haridvāra where he saw Maitreya 'of fathomless wisdom.'

In answering Vidura's questions about the Supreme Truth, Maitreya describes how it is by the Lord's Māyā that the Jīva appears to be bound though in reality it is unbound. The philosophy expounded is purely advaitic when Maitreya says that just as a man sees himself beheaded in a dream though in reality his head is in tact so also the Jīva to all appearances is confined in a body though actually it is not.[2]

In the eleventh adhyāya of the third skandha we come across an interesting śloka.[3] "The minutest particle of material substance, (which cannot be further divided) which has not yet evolved, nay, not even been combined with other similar particles and hence eternally exists (in that causal state)

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1. इदं भागवतं नाम यन्मे भगवतोदितम् ।
संग्रहोऽयं विभूतीनां त्वमेतद् विपुलीकुरु ॥ Ibid. II. 7. 51.
2. यदर्थेन विनामुष्य पुंस आत्मविपर्ययः ।
प्रतीयत उपद्रष्टुः स्वशिरश्छेदनादिकः ॥ Ibid. III. 7. 10.
3. चरमः सद्विशेषाणामनेकोऽसंयुतः सदा ।
परमाणु स विज्ञेयो नृणामैक्यभ्रमो यतः ॥ Ibid III. II. 1.

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should be known by the name of Paramāṇu. It is the combination of more than one such Paramāṇus that creates in the mind of men the illusory notion of an unit." The reference here is to the atom in the modern scientific language. Science has proved that objects are made up of molecules which in turn is made up of atoms. This śloka only proves that our ancients were familiar with this scientific discovery. The Vaiśeṣika school of philosophy also proves that our ancients were familiar with the smallest unit of matter, namely, the atom.

Next there is a whole adhyāya dealing with divisions of Time and the various forms of creation by Brahmā.

The story of the birth of Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu and the death of Hiraṇyākṣa at the hands of the divine boar are also narrated in the third skandha.

Kapila's instructions to his mother Devahūtī form an important part of the third skandha and it embodies the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies.

Kapila's instructions to his mother.

Among the six systems of Indian philosophy, Kapila is well known as the founder of the Sānkhya system and this same Kapila has been spoken of as an avatāra of Viṣṇu in the Purāṇas.

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Kapila's teaching is adapted to suit a bhakta. Thus he says that yoga directed towards Ātman brings about Mukti. When the mind is attached to the transformation of the guṇas there is bondage which is cut asunder as soon as the attachment is broken. A detached mind perceives Ātman through wisdom, dispassion and devotion. Even to the yogīs constant devotion to Bhagavān leads to the path of Mukti. The character of Yoga is described in adhyāya XXVIII. 2-7.*

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* स्वधर्माचरणं शक्त्या विधर्माच्च निवर्तनम् ।
दैवाल्लब्धेन सन्तोष आत्मविच्चरणार्चनम् ॥
ग्राम्यधर्मनिवृत्तिश्च मोक्षधर्मरतिस्तथा ।
मितमेध्यादनं शश्वद् विविक्तक्षेमसेवनम् ॥

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The company of sādhus or sajjanas, opens wide the door to Mukti. They are people who have forbearance and compassion, who are friendly to all beings, who have no enemies, who are free from passions and above all who have firm and undivided bhakti in Bhagavān. Their company removes attachment to the world. By hearing them engaged in the adoration of Bhagavān our hearts are also drawn towards Him. "Devotion causes dispassion and makes easy the path of yoga. By indifference to the guṇa transformations of Prakṛti, by wisdom fostered by dispassion, by yoga and by bhakti offered to Bhagavān, the Jīva attains mukti in that verv life."

Devahūtī asks Kapila how mukti was possible when Prakṛti and Puruṣa were eternally co-existent and interdependent in manifestation. Kapila's answer is interesting and instructive; "By unselfish performance of duties, by purification of the mind, by intense bhakti on Bhagavān fostered by the recital of His glory, by wisdom based on the knowledge of the tattvas, by strong dispassion, by austere yoga, by intense concentration on Ātman, Prakṛti becomes daily consumed even as the wood is consumed by its own fire caused by constant friction. Given up as already enjoyed and constantly found fault with, Prakṛti does no harm to the Puruṣa centred in self. Dreams do harm in sleep. But when a man wakes up they lose all power to injure, as they are then found to be dreams only."[1]

The next important exposition of Kapila is on Bhakti yoga.

अहिंसा सत्यमास्तेयं यावदर्थपरिग्रहः ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तपः शौचं स्वाध्यायः पुरुषार्चनम् ॥
मौनं सदासनजयस्थैर्यं प्राणजयः जनैः ।
प्रत्याहारश्चेन्द्रियाणां विषयान्मनसा हृदि ॥
स्वधिष्ण्यानामेकदेशे मनसा प्राणधारणम् ।
वैकुण्ठलीलाभिध्यानं समाधानं तथाऽऽत्मनः ॥
एतैरन्यैश्च पथिभिर्मनो दृष्टमसत्पथम् ।
बुद्ध्या युञ्जीत शनकैर्जितप्राणो ह्यतन्द्रितः ॥ Ibid. III. 28. 2–7.

1. अनिमित्तनिमित्तेन स्वधर्मेणामलात्मना ।
तीव्रया मयि भक्त्या च श्रुतसंभृतया चिरम् ॥
ज्ञानेन दृष्टतत्त्वेन वैराग्येण बलीयसा ।
तपोयुक्तेन योगेन तीव्रेणात्मसमाधिना ॥

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Bhakti yoga is either saguṇa or nirguṇa and saguṇa bhakti is again either sāttvika, rājasa or tāmasa. Nirguṇa bhakti is "the uninterrupted flow of the mind-stream towards Me (Bhagavān) dwelling in the hearts of all—like that of the waters of the Gaṅgā towards the ocean—at the mere mention of My virtues, combined with motiveless and unremitting love for Me, the Supreme Person.[1] The devoted prefer to serve Bhagavān for ever and do not accept sālokya, sārṣti, sāmīpya, sārūpya and sāyujya even when offered. These are the five kinds of mukti denoting residence in the same loka with the Supreme Being, equality with the Supreme Being in all the divine attributes, assimilation with the Supreme Being, possessing a similar form as the Supreme Being and absorption in the Supreme Being. The devoted must be humble, compassionate, respectful and self-controlled. Their days must be spent in hearing and reciting the glory of Bhagavān. Bhakti, as described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, is discussed in chapters IV, V and VI of this work.

The life and death of a man in the world and his path to Yama-loka after death are also described in this skandha. Devahūtī heard all this and her ignorance being removed she found light within herself and finally attained moksa.

The Fourth Skandha.

Each Manvantara has one Manu, his sons and daughters, the Devas, Indra (or the king of the devas) and the seven ṛṣis

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प्रकृतिः पुरुषस्येह दह्यमानात्वहर्निशम् ।
तिरोभवित्री शनकैरग्नेर्योनिरिवारणिः ॥
भुक्तभोगा परित्यक्ता दृष्टदोषा च नित्यशः ।
नेश्वरस्याशुभं धत्ते स्वे महिम्नि स्थितस्य च ॥
यथा ह्यप्रतिबुद्धस्य प्रस्वापो बह्वनर्थभृत् ।
स एव प्रतिबुद्धस्य न वै मोहाय कल्पते ॥
एवं विदिततत्वस्य प्रकृतिर्मयि मानसम् ।
युञ्जतो नापकुरुत आत्मारामस्य कर्हिचित् ॥ Ibid. 27. 21–26.

1. मद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्वगुहाशये ।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गङ्गाम्भसोऽम्बुधौ ॥
लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम् ।
अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥ Ibid. III. 29. 11–12.

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who all come into being at its beginning and pass away at its end.

In the Svāyambhuva Manvantara, Svāyambhuva was the Manu, the Tuṣita devas were the devatās, Marīci and others were the seven ṛṣis and Yajña was both the avatāra of Viṣṇu and the king of gods. Manu had two sons called Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and his three daughters were Ākūtī, Devahūtī and Prasūtī. The first chapter of the fourth skandha describes in detail the descendants of Manu Svāyambhuva.

Chapters II–VII of the fourth skandha deal with the Dakṣa Yajña. Dakṣa Yajña is interesting in many ways. Among other things it is an illuminating study of the comparative importance of Viṣṇu and Śiva in those times. A critical and comparative study of the Dakṣa Yajña is given in the next chapter.

Chapters VIII–XII contain the Dhruva legend and chapters XIII–XXIX contain the story of Purañjana, in the nature of an allegory. It illustrates how the Jīva which is akin to the Supreme in essence, becomes united with different kinds of bodies (like insects, animals and human beings) in the world, through Māyā. Among such bodies the human body is considered the best. Due to the influence of Māyā the Jīva remains contemplating on the emphemeral pleasures of the senses and performs actions which in turn bind it to future births and deaths. Freedom from this ignorance is secured through supreme devotion to the Lord and "contact firmly established in the Supreme through Devotion induces aversion to the pleasures of the senses and brings enlightenment." This is the lesson taught by the Purañjana allegory. The last adhyāyas of the fourth skandha narrate the story of the Pracetas brothers.

The Fifth Skandha.

The first chapter of this skandha deals with Manu's son Priyavrata and an interesting legend is narrated here in connection with the rise of the seven dvīpas.

Priyavrata ruled over the earth for 400,000,000 years. Observing that while the sun illumined one half of the world the

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other half remained dark, king Priyavrata decided to illumine the dark regions and make it all day and no night. He thus followed the sun god seven times with a very swift chariot. Then Brahmā appeared and asked Priyavrata to desist from the task which was not his. The Purāṇa explains that the ruts caused by the wheel of Priyavrata's chariot are the seven oceans, which gave rise to the seven dvīpas—Jambū, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śaka and Puṣkara.[1] Each succeeding dvīpa is thrice as large as the one preceding it and the seven oceans consist of salt (kṣāra), sugarcane juice (ikṣu), wine (sura), clarified butter (ghṛta), milk (kṣīra), curd (dadhi) and pure water (śuddhoda).[2]

Chapters 4–6 narrate the story of Ṛṣabha who was born of Nābhi and Merudevī. Ṛṣabha is described as one of the avatāras of Viṣṇu and he became a Paramahamsa. The Jaina tradition proclaims Ṛṣabha as one of its tīrthaṅkaras and the description of Ṛṣabha as a Paramahamsa in the Purāṇa agrees with this. Jainism believes in twentyfour tīrthaṅkaras of whom Ṛṣabha is said to be the first tīrthaṅkara. He was born of king Nābhi and his queen Marudevī also called Marudevā, (not Merudevī as given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) who were twin brother and sister.[3] Nābhi and Marudevī in their turn were also from a twin brother and sister called Marudevā and Śrīkāntā respectively. This system was prevalent in what is known as the yugala-dharma in Jainism. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as well, we come across children born to a brother and sister which has been discussed in the last chapter of this work. According to Jaina tradition Ṛṣabha married Sumaṅgalā and Sunandā of whom the former was his twin sister.[4] But the

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1. यो वा उ ह तद्रथचरणनेमिकृतपरिवातास्ते सप्त सिन्धव आसन् यत एव कृताः सप्त भुवो द्वीपाः ॥ Ibid. V. 1. 31.

2. जम्बूप्लक्षशाल्मलिकुशक्रौञ्च शाकपुष्करसंज्ञास्तेषां परिमाणं पूर्वस्मात् पूर्वस्मादुत्तर उत्तरो यथासंख्यं द्विगुणमानेन बहिः समन्तत उपक्लृप्ताः ॥ क्षारोदेक्षुरसोदसुरोदघृतोदक्षीरोददधिमण्डोदशुद्धोदाः सप्त जलधयः सप्त द्वीपपरिखा इवाभ्यन्तरद्वीपसमाना एकैकश्येन यथानुपूर्वं सप्तस्वपि बहिर्द्वीपेषु पृथक् परित उपकल्पिताः ॥

Ibid. V. 1. 32–33

3. Triṣaṣṭiśalākapuruṣa Caritra Vol. I. p. 100.

4. Ibid. p. 140.

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Bhāgavata Purāṇa avoids this controversy and mentions Jayantī (who was bestowed on him by Indra) as his wife. Ṛṣabha became cakravartī and reorganised the society. He taught his subjects the art of making pottery and appointed carpenters for building houses.[1] So also the art of painting, weaving, as also various kinds of business like agriculture and trade were introduced by Ṛṣabha. Further it is said that "the Master established the fourfold means of conciliation, bribes, dissension and force ; he introduced measures of weight and many more such reforms. After governing his subjects and establishing them on a firm footing Ṛṣabha gave up his kingdom to his son Bharata and was initiated into the order of monks. When he had performed penance for a "lac of pūrvas from the time of initiation" he attained mokṣa.[2] Being "the first king, the first ascetic, the first head of a congregation"[3] he was known as the first tīrthaṅkara.

There are twentythree more tīrthaṅkaras in Jainism. They are Ajita, Sambhava, Abhinandana, Sumati Svāmin, Padmaprabha, Supārśva, Candraprabha, Suvidhi, Sitala, Śreyansa, Vasupūjya, Vimala Svāmin, Anantajit, Dharmanātha, Śāntinātha, Kunthunātha, Aranatha, Malli, Munisuvrata, Nemi, Ariṣtanemi, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra (or Vīra). It is interesting to note that the tīrthaṅkara Neminātha belonged to the Yadu family[4] and was born at Mathurā. He is called a cousin of Kṛṣṇa and Nemi was as much a lover of animals as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. While Kṛṣṇa is known as a great friend of cows (Gopāla, Govinda) Neminātha was a lover of all animals. It is said that while preparations for Nemi's marriage were going on he heard the cries of many animals confined to be butchered for the marriage feast. As soon as he heard this he turned his back on marriage and ordered all the caged animals to be set free. Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra, the twentythird and twentyfourth tīrthaṅkaras, are historical personages. Just as Buddha later on came to be regarded as an avātara of

1. Ibid, p. 152 ff.
2. Ibid. p. 358 ff.
3. Ibid. p. 1.
4. Ibid. p. 6.

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Viṣṇu so also, in all probability, the Jaina Ṛṣabha in course of time came to be ranked as an avatāra of Viṣṇu.

The next is an account of king Bharata who was the eldest of Ṛṣabha's sons. Bhāratavarṣa is named after this noble king. Before him this land was known as Ajanābha.[1] It is normally understood that Bhāratavarṣa is so called after Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta. But it is made clear here that Bhāratavarṣa owes its name to Ṛṣabha's son Bharata. This tradition recorded in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also finds support in other Purāṇas. Thus the Vāyu Purāṇa says that Bhāratavarṣa was so called after Bharata a descendant of the first Manu.[2] Another derivation of the name Bhāratavarṣa is given in the Vāyu and Matsya Purāṇas where Bharata is identified with Manu himself.[3] In the Nirukta, Yāska interprets Bharata as the Sun himself.[4] (Āditya).

In this connection an interesting episode exemplifying the evils of attachment is told. Bharata retired to the forest and led an austere life devoted to the Supreme Being. One day he came across a deer drinking water from a stream. Suddenly the roar of a lion was heard and the deer seized with panic jumped across the stream and while doing so gave birth to the baby fawn it was carrying. Soon afterwards the mother died and the little one was left helpless. Bharata took pity on it and reared it up as his own child. He became so attached to it that even at the time of his death he was thinking of the deer. This resulted in Bharata being reborn as a deer in his next birth. Though born a deer Bharata could remember his former birth. In order not to lapse into the same error he remained unattached to any object and finally gave up his body

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1. अजनाभं नामैतद्वर्षं भारतमिति यत आरभ्य व्यपदिशन्ति ॥

Bhā. P. V. 7. 3.

2. हिमाद्रेर्दक्षिणं वर्षं भरताय न्यवेदयत् ।
तस्मात्तं भारतं वर्षं तस्य नाम्ना विदुर्बुधाः ॥ Vāyu P.

3. वर्षं यद्भारतं नाम यत्रेयं भारती प्रजा ।
भरणाच्च प्रजानां वै मनुर्भरत उच्यते ॥
निरुक्तवचनाच्चैवं वर्षं तद्भारतं स्मृतम् ॥

4. भरत आदित्यस्तस्य भारती ॥ Yāska 'Nirukta'

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when the time came. Next being born as a Brāhmaṇa in the line of Aṅgiras he attained final emancipation.

It is in the fifth skandha that we come across ancient geography as conceived by the sages.

Thus it is said that Jambu dvīpa is in the centre of the Bhūmaṇḍala and it is niyuta yojanas in area. There are nine varṣas in Jambu Dvīpa each 9000 yojanas in area completely divided by eight mountain ranges. Though the area of every varṣa is given as 9000 yojanas, Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla are exceptions for they extend over 34,000 yojanas. Ilāvarta is the central varṣa.

In the centre of Jambu Dvīpa stands the Sumeru mountain. It is called the mountain of Gold and is lakṣa yojanas high.[1] To the north of Ilāvṛta we have the three mountain ranges Nīla, Śveta and Śṛṇgavān in order. These are also the boundary ranges of Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya and Kuru respectively. They spread east and west upto the salt ocean. They are two thousand yojanas wide. In height each suceeding one is a little over one tenth part shorter than the preceding one.

To the south of Ilāvṛta also there are three ranges—Niṣadha, Hemakūta and Himālaya bordering on Harivarṣa, Kimpuruṣa and Bharata respectively.

To the west of Ilāvṛta is the Mālyavat range and to the east lies the Gandha-mādana range. These are the boundary ranges of Ketumāla and Bhadrāvśa respectively.

Thus the nine varṣas are Ilāvṛta, Bharata, Kimpuruṣa, Harivarṣa, Ketumāla, Gandhamādana, Ramyaka, Hiraṇmaya and Kuru. Bhāratavarṣa is described as the field of Karma while the other varṣas are places of fruition of the merits of those who go to svarga. A lengthy description of the different varṣas enumerating their many blessings and the deity presiding over

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1. The Vāyu Purāṇa give us the height of the Meru mountain as 84,000 yojanas and its depth beneath the level of the earth as 16,000 yojanas. Thus its total height is a lakṣa yojanas. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa gives the total height.

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each varṣa is next given. This is followed by a list of the various mountains and rivers found in Bhāratavarṣa.*

Enveloping the Jambu dvīpa is the salt ocean and next to that is the Plakṣa dvīpa. The Plakṣa dvīpa is surrounded by the ocean of wine and encircling that is the Śālmali Dvīpa. The Kuśadvīpa comes next and it is covered on all sides by an ocean of clarified butter. The Krauñca dvīpa succeeds, surrounded by an ocean of milk. The Śaka dvīpa follows the Krauñca divided only by an ocean of curds. And last of all is the Puṣkara dvīpa which is twice as large as the Śaka dvīpa and is surrounded by an ocean of pure water.

The Lokā-loka mountain is beyond the ocean of pure water, and between the ocean and the Lokā-loka mountains there is as much land as there is between Meru and Mānasottara (in the Puṣkara Dvīpa) mountains. Beyond this intervening land is the golden land and then comes the Lokāloka mountain. It is so called because it divides the Loka (the regions lighted by t he sun) from the Aloka or the regions unlighted by the sun.

Lokāloka

× × × ×

Golden land

Land beyond pure water ocean

Pure water ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Puṣkara Dvīpa (Mānasottara Mt.)

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* भारतेऽप्यस्मिन् वर्षे सरिच्छैलाः सन्ति बहवो मलयो मङ्गलप्रस्थो मैनाकस्त्रिकूट ऋषभः कूटकः कोलकः सह्यो देवगिरिर्ऋष्यमूकः श्रीशैलो वेङ्कटो महेन्द्रो वारिधारो विन्ध्यः शुक्तिमानृक्षगिरिः परियात्रो द्रोणश्चित्रकूटो गोवर्धनो रैवतकः ककुभो नीलो गोकामुख इन्द्रकीलः कामगिरिरिति चान्ये च शतसहस्रशः शैलास्तेषां नितम्बप्रभवा नदा नद्यश्च सन्त्यसंख्याताः ॥ Bha. P. V. 19. 16.

चन्द्रवसा ताम्रपर्णी अवटोदा कृतमाला वैहायसी कावेरी वेणी पयस्विनी शर्करावर्ता तुङ्गभद्रा कृष्णा वेण्या भीमरथी गोदावरी निर्विन्ध्या पयोष्णी तापी रेवा सुरसा नर्मदा चर्मण्वती सिन्धुरन्धः शोणश्च नदौ महानदी वेदस्मृतिर्ऋषिकुल्या त्रिसामा कौशिकी मन्दाकिनी यमुना सरस्वती दृषद्वती गोमती सरयू रोधस्वती सप्तवती सुषोमा शतद्रूश्चन्द्रभागा मरुद्वृधा वितस्ता असिक्नी विश्वेति महानद्यः ॥ Ibid. V. 19. 18.

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Milk Ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Śaka Dvīpa

Sour Milk Ocean (Ocean of Curds)

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Krauñca Dvīpa

Clarified butter ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Kuśa Dvīpa

Wine Ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Śālmali Dvīpa

Sugar Cane Juice Ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Plakṣa Dvīpa

Salt Ocean

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Jumbu Dvīpa (Meru Mt.)

Bhūr, Bhuvar and Svar are the three lokas beyond which is the Lokāloka. The sphere of the sun is Bhuvar and it is the connecting link between Bhūr and Svar.

Then follows an account of the sun with reference to the different seasons. According to the Purāṇas it is the sun that is described as changing its course ; and thus when the sun takes to the northward course (uttarāyana) the days become longer and nights shorter ; whereas in its southward journey (dakṣiṇāyana) the nights are longer with the days shorter. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the period of time during which the sun traverses the signs of Meṣa (Aries) and Tulā (Libra) is described as having the days and nights equal. As is well known it is only on two days in the year that the days and nights are equal in duration and they are the vernal and autumnal enquinoxes. But the disparity in length between days and nights during the period described in the Purāṇa is negligible

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"as it never exceeds twentyfour minutes." Hence the days and nights are spoken of as equal in length.*

The Mānasottara mountain in the Puṣkara Dvīpa is the path of revolution of the sun round Meru. In one year the sun goes round the Mānasottara once and the wheel of the chariot is therefore called Samvatsara. The twelve months are described as the twelve spokes of that wheel and the six seasons as the six arcs. One end of the pole is on the Meru and the other is on Mānasottara. The seven Vedic metres are the seven horses and they are driven by Aruṇa. There is not much information of an astronomical character in our Purāṇa. The description of the sun is followed by that of other planets. The moon is said to be a lakh yojanas beyond the arc of the sun.† Two lakh yojanas above the moon are the twentyseven zodiacal constellations and also the star Abhijit.[1] Uśanā (Venus) is about two lakh yojanas beyond them, Budhā (Mercury) is again two lakh Yojanas above Venus and Mars (Aṅgāraka) is another two lakh yojanas from Mercury. Jupiter is two lakh yojanas beyond Mars, Saturn is another two lakh yojanas above Jupiter. The seven stars known as the Saptarṣis are eleven lakh yojanas beyond Saturn and they move round the pole star (Dhruva Nakshatra) which is thirteen lakh yojanas beyond the Saptarṣis.[2]

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* एतेन हि दिवो मण्डलमानं तद्विद उपदिशन्ति यथा द्विदलयोर्निष्पावादीनां ते अन्तरेणान्तरिक्षं तदुभयसंधितम् ॥ यन्मध्यगतो भगवांस्तपताम्पतिस्तपन आतपेन त्रिलोकीं प्रतपत्यवभासयत्यात्मभासा स एष उदगयनदक्षिणायनवैषुतसंज्ञाभिर्मान्द्यशैघ्र्यसमानाभिर्गतिभिरारोहणावरोहणसमानस्थानेषु यथासवनमभिपद्यमानो मकरादिषु राशिष्वहोरात्राणि दीर्घह्रस्वसमानानि विधत्ते । यदा मेषतुलयोर्वर्तते तदाहोरात्राणि समानानि भवन्ति यदा वृषभादिषु पञ्चसु च राशिषु चरति तदाहान्येव वर्धन्ते ह्रसति च मासि मास्येकैका घटिका रात्रिषु । यदा वृश्चिकादिषु पञ्चसु वर्तते तदाहोरात्राणि विपर्ययाणि भवन्ति ॥ यावद् दक्षिणायन महानि वर्धन्ते यावदुदगयनं रात्रयः ॥ Ibid. V. 21. 2–6.

† एवं चन्द्रमा अर्कभागस्तिभ्य उपरिष्टाल्लक्षयोजनत उपलभ्यमान ॥ Ibid. V. 22. 8.

1. तत उपरिष्टात् त्रिलक्षयोजनतो नक्षत्राणि मेरुं दक्षिणेनैव कालायन ईश्वरयोजितानि सहाभिजिताष्टाविंशतिः ॥ Ibid. V. 22. 11.

2. The distances between the various planets are given as below in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa :—

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In the 24th chapter other planets are described and here we find a reference to Rāhu who is traditionally believed to be the cause of both solar and lunar eclipses.

The seven regions below the earth are next enumerated.[1] They are : Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla.[2] Lord Ananta resides 30,000 yojanas below Pātāla and this same Ananta is called Saṁkarṣaṇa in the Vaiṣṇava cult.[3]

The fifth skandha concludes with a description of the Narakas. They are twentyeight in number and are enumerated as follows :—Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra, Raurava, Mahāraurava, Kumbhīpāka, Kālasūtra, Asipatravana, Sūkara Mukha, Andhakūpa, Kṛmibhojana, Samdamśa, Tapta-Sūrmi, Vajrakantaka Śālmali, Vaitaraṇī, Pūyoda, Prāṇarodha, Viśasana, Lālābhakṣa, Sārameyādana, Avīchi and Ayaḥpāna, Kṣāra-Kardama,

The earth to the sun	—	100,000	yojanas
The sun to the moon	—	100,000	,,
The moon to the lunar constellations	—	100,000	,,
The constellations to Budha	—	200,000	,,
Budhā to Śukra	—	200,000	,,
Śukra to Angāraka (Mars)	—	200,000	,,
Angāraka to Bṛhaspati	—	200,000	,,
Bṛhaspati to Śani (Saturn)	—	200,000	,,
Śani to the seven ṛṣis	—	100,000	,,
Seven ṛṣis to Dhruva	—	100,000	,,
Dhruva to Maharloka	—	10,000,000	,,
Maharloka to Janaloka	—	20,000,000	,,
Janaloka to Tapoloka	—	80,000,000	,,
Tapoloka to Satyaloka	—	480,000,000	,,

1. ……सप्त भूविवरा एकैकशो योजनायुतान्तरेणायामविस्तारेणोपक्लृप्ता अतलं वितलं सुतलं तलातलं महातलं रसातलं पातालमिति ॥ Ibid. V. 24. 7.

2. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa names the regions as Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimat, Mahātala, Sutala and Pātāla. The Vāyu Purāṇa has Rasātala, Sutala, Vitala, Gabhastimat, Mahātala, Śrītala and Pātāla. The Padma Purāṇa agrees with the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

3. तस्य मूलदेशे त्रिंशद्योजनसहस्रान्तर आस्ते या वै कला भगवतस्तामसी समाख्यातानन्त इति सात्वतीया दृष्टदृश्ययोः संकर्षणमहमित्यभिमनलक्षणं यं संकर्षणमित्याचक्षते ॥ Ibid. V. 25. 1.

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Rakṣogaṇa-Bhojana, Śūlaprota, Dandaśuka, Āvata-nirodhana, Paryāvartana and Sūcīmukha.

The description of the Narakas is a fine example of Purāṇic exaggeration. Each naraka is explained as a punishment for sin of a particular character.* The idea of hell is not new to Hinduism. Human thought throughout the world proceeds on the same lines and we find the idea of hell or *Naraka* common to all the religions of the world.

The Sixth Skandha.

In the first three chapters of the sixth skandha the efficacy of the utterance of the Lord's name (Nāmopāsana) is illustrated by means of the story of Ajamīla. This story has been discussed at length in the fourth chapter in connection with Nāmopāsana or Nāmasankīrtana.

The Indra-Vṛtra legend forms an important part of the sixth Skandha. Adhyayas VII–XII deal with this legend. Vṛtra, though a demon, was greatly devoted to Lord Viṣṇu for he was the famous Citraketu (devotee of Śrī Hari) in his former birth. This legend has already been discussed by eminent scholars like Ghāte.

The sixth Skandha ends with a narration of the birth of the forty-nine Maruts from Ditī.

The Seventh Skandha.

Parīkṣit asks Śuka about the apparent partiality of Bhagavān towards the Devas. Thus He kills the asuras in order to help the devas and this is in contradiction to His nature of Supreme Bliss.[1]

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* The Īśāvāsyopaniṣad refers to hell in the following verse :—
असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥ Īśā. Up. 3.
Bhavabhūti refers to hell in his Uttararāmacarita as अन्धतामिस्रा ह्यसूर्या नाम ते लोकाः प्रेत्य येभ्यः प्रलीयन्ते य आत्मघातिन··· ।
Uttara. Act. IV. p. 154.

1. समः प्रियः सुहृद् ब्रह्मन् भूतानां भगवान् स्वयम् ।
इन्द्रस्यार्थे कथं दैत्यानवधीद् विषमो यथा ॥
न ह्यस्यार्थः सुरगणैः साक्षान्निः श्रेयसात्मनः ।
नैवासुरेभ्यो विद्वेषो नोद्वेगश्चागुणस्य हि ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 1. 1–2.

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Śuka replies that though Bhagavān is beyond Prakṛti with its three guṇas, still he pervades and permeates the guṇas of His Māyā. Now these three guṇas have their different periods of increase and decrease, and in this phenomenon lies the apparent partiality of the Lord. Thus when Sattva prevails Bhagavān favours the Devas and Ṛṣis. When Rajas prevails He favours the Asuras. When Tamas prevails He favours the Yakṣas and rākṣasas. He thus follows the periodic tendency.[1]

Another point to be noticed is that the asuras are favoured by being killed by Bhagavān Himself. The most famous among the Asuras were Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa and finally Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra. All these Daityas were actually delivered from evil and attained mokṣa when killed by the various avatāras of Śrī Hari. Here asuras, rākṣasas, daityas and dānavas are all used in a general sense. They all denote those beings who do not follow the right path as opposed to the devas who follow the right code of conduct or ācāra. Thus Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu, (asuras) Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa (Rākṣasas) as also Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra (Kṣatriyas) had one common characteristic namely they did not follow the right path. Therefore they are called asuras, daityas etc. in a general sense. The story goes that these various pairs of asuras were actually Jaya and Vijaya, the doorkeepers of Lord Viṣṇu. On one occasion they refused admission to the Sanaka brothers (Kumāra brothers). This angered the brothers terribly and Jaya and Vijaya were cursed to become asuras for three successive births.

In their first birth they became Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu. Hiraṇyākṣa was killed by Śrī Hari in his Boar incarnation and to avenge his brother's death Hiraṇyakaśipu vowed bitter enmity to Lord Viṣṇu and His followers. The major part of the seventh Skandha is devoted to the story of the exploits of Hiraṇyakaśipu and how his son Prahlāda turned out to be a devout bhakta of Viṣṇu Himself. The prayers of Prahlāda are perhaps the most sublime in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Bhakti is glori-

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1. जयकाले तु सत्वस्य देवर्षीन् रजसोऽसुरान् ।
तमसो यक्षरक्षांसि तत्कालानुगुणोऽभजत् ॥ Ibid. VI. 1. 8.

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fied as greater than wealth, good birth, beauty, asceticism, learning, power, intellect or even Yoga. And it is heartening to note that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not sanction a man's superiority because of his birth alone. Here it is said that even a Chandāla (an out-caste) is much superior to a Brāhmaṇa who has all the twelve virtues but has no devotion to Viṣṇu.[1]

The prayer of Prahlāda is an unique expression of unselfishness and the spirit of self-sacrifice is conveyed when he says 'O Thou Supreme, I am not the least anxious for myself about the worldly existence however difficult it may be, for my mind is plunged in the nectar ocean of singing Thy glory. But I mourn for the ignorant, those that care only for the gratification of the senses and for the means of such gratification while they remain estranged from Thee. Generally O Deva. the munis are desirous of their own Mokṣa, they hold their tongue and roam in solitude without caring for the good of others. But I do not like to be liberated alone, leaving behind me all the afflicted : I find no shelter for these misguided people except Thee."[2] One is reminded of the Mahākaruṇa doctrine of the Boddhisattvas of the Mahāyāna Buddhists while going through Prahlāda's prayers.

A description of the Varṇāśramadharma and the various paths called Pitṛyāna and Devayāna* is followed by a few hints on Yoga and the japa of the praṇava. (Om).

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1. विप्राद् द्विषड्गुणयुतादरविन्दनाभपादारविन्दविमुखाच्छ्वपचं वरिष्ठम् ।
मन्ये तदर्पितमनोवचनेहितार्थप्राणं पुनाति स कुलं न तु भूरिमानः ॥
Ibid. VII. 9. 10.

2. कोन्वत्र तेऽखिलगुरो भगवन् प्रयास उत्तारणेऽस्य भवसम्भवलोपहेतोः ।
मूढेषु वै महदनुग्रह आर्तबन्धो किं तेन ते प्रियजनाननुसेवतां नः ॥
नैवोद्विजे पर दुरत्ययवैतरण्यास्त्वद्वीर्यगायनमहामृतमग्नचित्तः ।
शोचे ततो विमुखचेतस इन्द्रियार्थमायासुखाय भरमुद्वहतो विमूढान् ॥
प्रायेण देव मुनयः स्वविमुक्तिकामा मौनं चरन्ति विजने न परार्थनिष्ठाः ।
नैतान् विहाय कृपणान् विमुमुक्ष एको नान्यं त्वदस्य शरणं भ्रमतोऽनुपश्ये ॥
Ibid. VII. 9. 42–4.

* There are two paths mentioned in our scriptures by which the departed souls proceed to enjoy the fruits of Karma done during their life on the earth. One is called devayāna (the path of gods) or arcir-mārga (the path of light) and the other Pitṛyāna (the path of manes) or dhūmamārga (the path of

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The Eighth Skandha.

The initial few chapters of the eighth skandha are devoted to the description of the various manvantaras. The eighth skandha abounds in legends. The legend of the elephant king is described as having occurred in the fourth manvantara when Tāmasa was the Manu. The 'Churning of the ocean' is a popular legend which took place in the 6th Manvantara called the Chākṣuṣa Manvantara. Adhyāyas 15–23 give an account of the Bali legend which is connected with the Vāmanāvatāra. The 24th Adhyāya has yet another legend i.e. the Flood legend connected with the Matsyāvatāra.

Śrāddhadeva Manu (Vaivasvata Manu) is the seventh Manu and he is reigning at present. A lengthy account of this Manu and his descendants is given in the ninth skandha. As an introduction to the seventh Manu, the six preceding Manus are referred to in this Skandha.

"Like the dynastic lists in Sumer and Egypt, the Indian lists also record pre-diluvian dynasties" though there is a good mixture of myths and legends. Manu Svāyambhuva is hailed as the first Manu and he was born of Brahmā himself. Through Śatarūpā he had two sons called Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and three daughters.

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darkness). The former leads to Brahmaloka also known as satyaloka while the latter leads to Candraloka or the region of the moon. One who goes by devayāna does not come back again to this world but remains in Brahma-loka till the end of the cycle when he attains complete absorption in Brahman with Brahmā. This process of emancipation is known as kramamukti, namely, salvation which is achieved gradually. None but those who worship the Saguṇa Brahman, the naiṣṭhika-brahmacārin, the vānaprastha and the gṛhastha (householder knowing the pañcāgnividya) are eligible for devayāna. All others who are of ordinary knowledge and actions go, when they die, to Candraloka and there they remain for the enjoyment of the fruits of their good karma till its exhaustion. They then come back again with some residue of their past karma, to be reborn on this earth.

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Manu Svarociṣa, the second Manu, was the son of Svāyambhuva's daughter Ākūtī.[1] The third, fourth and fifth Manus i.e. Uttama, Tamasa and Raivata were sons of Priyavrata, the eldest son of Svāyambhuva Manu.[2] Chākṣuṣa was the sixth Manu and he belonged to the line of Dhruva, the famous devotee of Lord Viṣṇu.[3] The seventh Manu called Vaivasvata Manu is reigning at present. The race of Vaivasvata Manu is described at length in the ninth Skandha. The eighth Skandha also mentions the future seven Manus in the form of prophecies.[4]

Sāvarṇi, the son of Vivasvat by his wife Chāyā would be the eighth Manu.[5] The ninth Manu would be Dakṣa Sāvarṇi, the son of Varuṇa.[6] And the tenth Manu would be Brahma Sāvarṇi. The eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Manus would be Dharma-Sāvarṇi, Rudra-Sāvarṇi, Deva-Sāvarṇi and Indra-Sāvarṇi respectively.[7]

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1. स्वारोचिषो द्वितीयस्तु मनुरग्नेः सुतोऽभवत् ।
द्युमत्सुषेणरोचिष्मत्प्रमुखास्तस्य चात्मजाः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 1. 19.

2. तृतीय उत्तमो नाम प्रियव्रतसुतो मनुः ।
पवनः सृञ्जयो यज्ञहोत्राद्यास्तत्सुता नृप ॥ Ibid. VIII. 1. 23.
चतुर्थ उत्तमभ्राता मनुर्नाम्ना च तामसः ।
पृथुः ख्यातिर्नरः केतुरित्याद्या दश तत्सुताः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 1. 27.

3. षष्ठश्च चक्षुषः पुत्रश्चाक्षुषो नाम वै मनुः ।
पूरुपूरुषसुद्युम्नप्रमुखाश्चाक्षुषात्मजाः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 5. 7.

4. संक्षेपतो मयोक्तानि सप्त मन्वन्तराणि ते ।
भविष्याण्यथ वक्ष्यामि विष्णोः शक्त्यान्वितानि च ॥ Ibid. VIII. 8. 7.

5. अष्टमेऽन्तर आयाते सावर्णिर्भविता मनुः ।
निर्मोकविरजरकाद्याः सावर्णितनया नृप ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 11.

6. नवमो दक्षसावर्णिर्मनुर्वरुण संभवः ।
भूतकेतुर्दीप्तकेतुरित्याद्यास्तत्सुता नृप ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 18.

7. दशमो ब्रह्मसावर्णिरुपश्लोकसुतो महान् ।
तत्सुता भूरिषेणाद्या हविष्मत्प्रमुखा द्विजाः । Ibid. VIII. 13. 21.
मनुर्वै धर्मसावर्णिरेकादशम आत्मवान् ।
अनागतास्तत्सुताश्च सत्यधर्मादयो दश ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 24.
भविता रुद्रसावर्णी राजन् द्वादशमो मनुः ।
देववानुपदेवश्च देवश्रेष्ठादयः सुताः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 27.
मनुस्त्रयोदशो भाव्यो देवसावर्णिरात्मवान् ।

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The Ninth Skandha.

The ninth Skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa gives an account of Vaivasvata Manu and his descendants which forms what is known as the traditional history of India. Manu Vaivasvata is said to be the originator of the human race and all the dynasties mentioned in the Purāṇas spring from him.

Vaivasvata Manu had a child called Ilā who had a dual personality as a male Ila (called Sudyumna) and as the female Ilā. This has been discussed in the last chapter.

Manu had ten other valiant sons also. These were Ikṣvāku, Nṛga, Śaryāti, Diṣta, Dhṛṣta, Karūṣa, Nariṣyanta, Pṛṣadhra, Nābhāga and Kavi.[1] Many texts just mention nine sons of Manu and there is a great divergence in their names, as well as in the order, in the different accounts. Pargiter by comparison of the various texts suggests the following names in order :—Ikṣvāku, Nābhāga, Dhriṣta, Śaryāti, Nariṣyanta, Pramśu, Nābhāgodiṣtha (or Nābhānediṣtha) Karūṣa and Pṛṣadhra.

Of these ten Pṛṣadhra died unmarried and had no share of the earth because he killed his guru's cow. Kavi realised the Supreme while still young and went away to the forest. From Karūṣa came the Kārūṣas, the great fighters, 'who occupied the Karūṣa country—the region round the modern Rewah and eastwards to the river Son.[2] From Dhṛṣta sprang up the Kṣatriya clan called the Dhārṣtas, who attained Brahmanhood on this very earth. This probably refers to their acts of piety. This again proves that in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa there is no rigidity of caste. When the Kṣatriya Dhārṣtas displayed qualities found in Brāhmans they were called Brāhmans. Birth did not determine the caste of a person and the only

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चित्रसेनविचित्राद्या देवसावर्णिदेहजाः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 30.
मनुर्वा इन्द्रसावर्णिश्चतुर्दशम एष्यति ।
उरुगम्भीरबुद्ध्याद्या इन्द्रसावर्णिवीर्यजाः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 13. 33.

1. ततोऽयजन्मनुर्देवमपत्यार्थं हरिं प्रभुम् ।
इक्ष्वाकुपूर्वजान् पुत्रांल्लेभे स्वसदृशान् दश ॥ IX. 2. 2. Bhā. P.

2. करूषान्मानवादासन् कारूषाः क्षत्रजातयः ।
उत्तरापथगोप्तारो ब्रह्मण्या धर्मवत्सलाः ॥ IX. 2. 16. Bhā. P.

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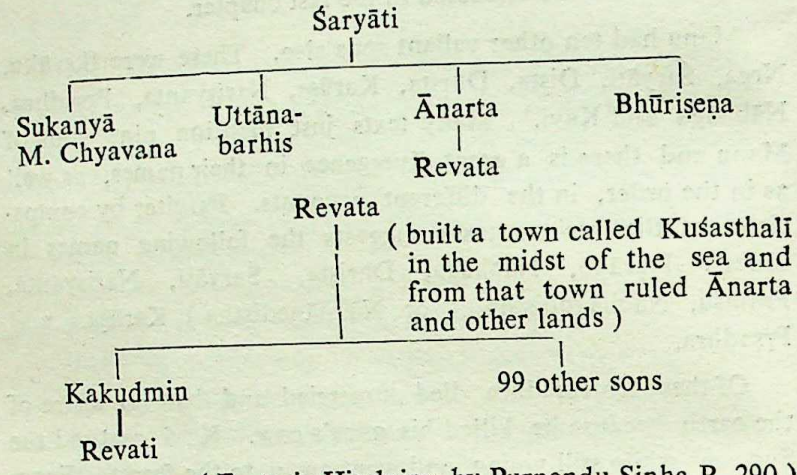
criterion was his actions. These Kṣatriyas probably ruled over Vāhīka in the Punjab.

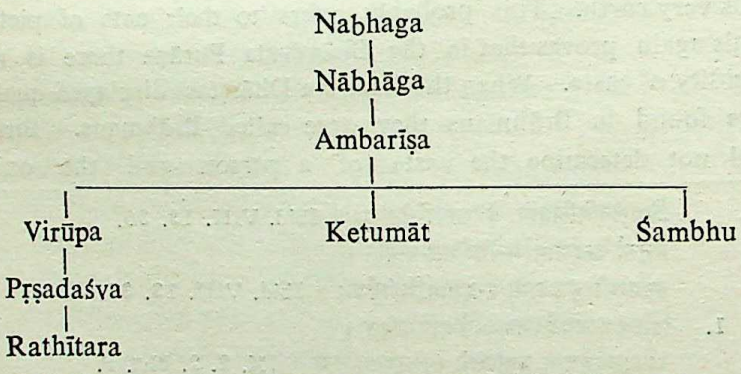
The descendants of Nariṣyanta and Diṣta are not very important from the historical point of view.

We now come to Śaryāti. He was the founder of the Śāryātas who were one of the earliest Aryan tribes to come in contact with Gujarāt. Gujarāt received its ancient name of Ānarta from Ānarta the son of Śaryāti.



(Esoteric Hinduism by Purnendu Sinha P. 290)

The Nābhāgas were the descendants of Nabhaga and they probably reigned in the mid-lands of the Gangetic Doab. Ambarīṣa, the renowned devotee of Viṣṇu, was a Nābhāga.



Nābhāgodiṣta settled in North Bihar and established the Vaiśāli dynasty which ruled at Vaiśāli identified with Basrah.

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arrived for the sacrifice and the question arose as to who should be offered pūja first. (Agrapūja). It was the custom to offer pūja to the most qualified man present. Sahadeva declared that Kṛṣṇa was the only person fit for Agra Pūja.[1] In the Bhāgavata it is Sahadeva who proclaims Kṛṣṇa to be the foremost among those present; but in the Mahābhārata it is Bhīṣma who says it. But there were certain kings who were jealous of the honour paid to Kṛṣṇa and among them the foremost was Śiśupāla. Words led to blows and in a duel between Śiśupāla and Kṛṣṇa the former was killed. The Rājasūya sacrifice was conducted in great splendour after which Kṛṣṇa and the other kings returned to their respective homes.

S'ālva attacks Dvāraka

At Dwāraka there was trouble caused by a friend of Śiśupāla called Śālva who possessed a chariot capable of moving through the air and encompassed in darkness.[2] Śālva attacked Dvāraka with a huge army and showered weapons from his aerial car. Pradyumna put up a strong fight against the enemy and Kṛṣṇa also returned from Hastināpura. Kṛṣṇa calls Śālva a great magician which shows that magic was practised in those days.[3] Kṛṣṇa caused his chariot to approach that of Śālva. When Śālva found that he was no match for Kṛṣṇa he resorted to strategy. He appeared before Kṛṣṇa holding another person like Vasudeva and killed him before Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is probably a case of hypnosis, Śālva being an adept in the art. Kṛṣṇa was bewildered for a moment—but only for one moment. He realized that there was some foul play and nothing could have happened to Vasudeva. He followed Śālva everywhere and smote the aerial car which fell to pieces. Thereafter he

1. सदस्याग्र्यार्हणार्हं वै विमृशन्तः सभासदः ।
नाध्यगच्छन्ननैकान्त्यात् सहदेवस्तदाब्रवीत् ॥
अर्हति ह्यच्युतः श्रैष्ठ्यं भगवान् सात्वतां पतिः ।
एष वै देवताः सर्वा देशकालधनादयः Ibid. X. 74. 18–19.
2. स लब्ध्वा कामगं यानं तमोधाम दुरासदम् ।
ययौ द्वारवतीं शालवो वैरं वृष्णिकृतं स्मरन् ॥ Ibid. X. 76. 8.
3. रथं प्रापय मे सूत शालवस्यान्तिकमाशु वै ।
संभ्रमस्ते न कर्तव्यो मायावी सौभराडयम् ॥ Ibid. X. 77. 10.

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cut the head of Śālva with his cakra. In the Vanaparva of the Mahābhārata Soubha is mentioned as a city that floats in the air whereas in the Bhāgavata it is only a chariot.

Śrīdāma

Chapters eighty and eightyone of the 10th Skandha describe how a poor brāhmaṇa called Śrīdāma who was the friend of Kṛṣṇa in his young days, was rewarded with riches and prosperity on visiting Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Dvāraka. This just shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not of a haughty nature and did not forget his friends even though they were poor and far below him in many qualities.

The greatness of Vasudeva

In chapter 86 an account of how Arjuna married Subhadrā by the Rākṣasa form of marriage is described. In chapter 87 the Lord himself discourses on Brahmatattva. Chapter 88 describes the greatness of Viṣṇu as against that of Śiva and narrates the legend of the Asura Vṛka. Vṛka propitiated Śiva with severe penance. Śiva appeared before him and granted him any boon he wanted. Vṛka said, 'May everybody die on whose head I shall lay my palm.' Though depressed at hearing that Śiva granted him the boon. But the wicked asura wanted to try its efficacy on Śiva himself. Śiva ran for his life and approached Vāsudeva the sole refuge of all distressed. Vāsudeva approached Vṛka in the guise of a brāhmin and through sweet words caused him to lay his palm on his own head. Instantly the asura was killed and Śiva was saved. Stories like this which proclaim Vāsudeva's greatness are found everywhere in the Purāṇa, its principal aim being the glorification of Vāsudeva. The next chapter also proclaims the greatness of Vāsudeva as against that of Brahmā and Śiva. The tenth skandha ends with a description of the various sons of Kṛṣṇa and their descendants. The Mahābhārata war and the part played by Kṛṣṇa does not figure in detail in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

XI Skandha

The second chapter of the XI skandha describes the characteristics of a Bhāgavata.

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"He who sees in all beings the existence of Bhagavān as in his own self, and sees all beings in Bhagavān within himself is the highest Bhāgavata.

He who bears love towards Īśvara, friendship towards his dependants, kindness towards the ignorant and indifference towards his enemies belongs to the next class of Bhāgavatas.

He who worships an image of Hari with faith but has no regard for bhaktas and for other beings is only a beginner as a bhakta.

The highest Bhāgavata perceives the objects with his senses but does not feel either aversion or pleasure. He looks upon the universe as the Māyā of Viṣṇu.

He is the favourite of Hari, who does not take pride in his birth, Karman, caste or āśrama.

The highest Bhāgavata does not know mine and thine either in wealth or in body. He looks upon all beings with equal eyes. His mind is always at peace.[1] In the seventh adhyāya of the eleventh skandha we come across a list of animals regarded as preceptors. A Brāhmaṇa tells Jadu, of immeasurable prowess, that his preceptors are the earth, air, sky, water, fire, moon, sun, the pigeon, ajagara snake, ocean flies, bees, elephants, black bees, deer, fish, piṅgala, kurara, boys, maids, serpents, ūrṇanābha and butterfly.[2] Among these preceptors there are many animals. Lessons to be learnt from animals form part of the moral teachings of many lands and in India the Pañcatantra and the Hitopadeśa are famous for such moral stories. In Buddhistic literature as well we come across statements proclaiming the various qualities that we should learn from animals and other things of Nature. Thus in "The

1. न यस्य स्वः पर इति वित्तेष्वात्मनि वा भिदा ।
सर्वभूतसमः शान्तः स वै भागवतोत्तमः Ibid. XI. 2. 52.

2. पृथिवी वायुराकाशमापोऽग्निश्चन्द्रमा रविः ।
कपोतोऽजगरः सिन्धुः पतङ्गो मधुकृद् गजः ॥
मधुहा हरिणो मीनः पिङ्गला कुररोऽर्भकः ।
कुमारी शरकृत् सर्प ऊर्णनाभिः सुपेशकृत् ॥
एते मे गुरवो राजंश्चतुर्विंशतिराश्रिताः ।
शिक्षा वृत्तिभिरेतेषामन्वशिक्षमिहात्मनः ॥ Ibid. XI. 7. 33-35.

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Questions of king Milinda" we find the cock, the squirrel, the panther, the tortoise, the lion and many more animals upheld as the gurus of men.[1]

There are many stories illustrating the futility of worldly life and advising human beings not to be blinded by the pleasures of the senses.

Uddhava asks Śri Kṛṣṇa about bhakti, desire, the way to conquer the senses etc. Bhagavān instructs him on all the questions and on the way to salvation. Bhakti is proclaimed as the only way to Mokṣa. Then follow discourses on Bhakti, Jñāna and Karma Yogas.

The fifteenth chapter enumerates the different siddhis as related by Bhagavān. There are three kinds of Siddhis : eight siddhis which exist in Bhagavān, another ten which are related to the guṇas and another five siddhis which illustrate what siddhis are.

The sixteenth chapter deals with the Vibhūtis of the Lord much in the same way as the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā. The seventeenth and the eighteenth deal with the Varṇa and Āśrama rules. Discourses on Sānkhya, the three guṇas Sattva, rajas and tamas, and the three yogas follow. After advising Uddhava on all these truths Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked him to go to Badari. The Yadus also left Dvāraka and went to Prabhāsa. There they quarrelled and being drunk killed one another. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was also killed by a huntsman being mistaken for a deer.* The eleventh Skandha ends with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's ascent to Vaikuṇṭha.

XII Skandha

The first chapter of the twelfth Skandha continues the traditional history given in the ninth Skandha. It mentions in the form of a prophecy the various kings who will rule at Magadha. Among them are mentioned Mahānandi and his

1. Sacred Books of the East edited by Maxmuller Vol. XXXVI 'The questions of King Milinda' pp. 280 ff.

* मुशलावशेषायः खण्डकृतेपुर्लुब्धको जरा ।
मृगास्याकारं तच्चरणं विव्याध मृगशङ्कया ॥ Ibid. XI. 30. 33.

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son Nanda by a Śūdra woman. Nanda had eight sons but they were all killed by the clever Cāṇakya who helped Chandragupta Maurya to win the Magadha throne.[1]

The Maurya dynasty was to be followed by the Śuṅga dynasty whose founder would be Puṣyamitra.[2] The Kaṇvas would follow the Śuṅgas and they would be followed by the Āndhra clan. The Āndhras would be followed by many rulers and finally there would be Śūdra and Mleccha kings.

The second chapter deals with the Kali age and its evils and the Kalki incarnation. The third chapter explains the characteristics of the different Yugas and records at length the evils of the Kaliyuga. The evils of the Kali age in fact form part of many of the Purāṇas.[3]

The fourth Adhyāya of the twelfth Skandha deals with Pralaya and then follows teachings on the Supreme Truth—Brahman, in preparation to Parīkṣit's death. Parīkṣit having heard all these truths from Śuka gave up all longings and waited for his end concentrating on Lord Hari, the end of all things. As cursed by the Brāhmin boy, Takṣaka bit Parīkṣit on the seventh day and thus passed away a foremost and righteous king. In all probability this story of the curse and Takṣaka were later additions. It is not uncommon to die through snake bites and Parīkṣit probably died through snake poison. It is also not impossible to conjecture that Takṣaka a non-Āryan Chief, assassinated king Parīkṣit. There were reasons for this murder. When Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna burnt the Khāṇḍava forest it is said that all the serpents (the clan of which Takṣaka was the head) were killed and Takṣaka was saved because he was absent. The serpents here probably indicate only the emblem of the clan. Just as in modern

1. स एव चन्द्रगुप्तं वै द्विजो राज्येऽऽभिषेक्ष्यति ।
तत्सुतो वारिसारस्तु ततश्चाशोकवर्धनः ॥ Ibid. XII. I. 13.
2. हत्वा बृहद्रथं मौर्यं तस्य सेनापतिः कलौ ।
पुष्पमित्रस्तु शुङ्गाह्वः स्वयं राज्यं करिष्यति ।
अग्निमित्रस्ततस्तस्मात् सुज्येष्ठोऽथ भविष्यति ॥ Ibid. XII. I. 16.
3. Bhā. P. XII. 3. 24–30; Vāyu. P. Chapter 58, Brahmāṇḍa P. II. 31; Mats. P. Chap. 144; Viṣ. P. VI. I; Kūrma P. I. 29.

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days we have different flags representing different countries so also it is quite possible that the ancients used the figures of different animals and reptiles to distinguish one clan from another. Thus the clan which Takṣaka headed probably used the serpent as their emblem and were known by their symbol as "the serpents".

Though Takṣaka escaped fire the ruin caused to his tribe by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna was ever fresh in his memory and he was waiting for an opportunity to avenge the insult. As long as Kṛṣṇa and the five Pāṇḍavas lived this opportunity never came as they were too strong for Takṣaka. But when Parīkṣit came to the throne there was a slow deterioration in the conditions which is indicated by the fact that Kali made its appearance in his kingdom. Takṣaka availed himself of the chance and disguising himself as a Brahman entered the palace and assassinated king Parīkṣit. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa as also the Mahābhārata mention that Takṣaka came in the guise of a brahman. A serpent cannot disguise itself. So also it is said that Takṣaka bribed Kaśyapa to desist from curing Parīkṣit.* This also is only possible if Takṣaka were a human being.

Janamejaya, the son of Parīkṣit, started a snake-sacrifice in order to avenge his father's death. The sacrifice went on for a long time and finally Janamejaya was pacified and persuaded to give up the sacrifice by Bṛhaspati and sages like Sūta.

The later chapters relate the origin of the Vedas, their division and arrangement by Vyāsa, how Vyāsa taught them to his disciples etc. etc. The Paurāṇikas are also enumerated and the contents of the Purāṇas are mentioned. The seventh chapter ends with the mention of the eighteen Purāṇas.[1]

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* तक्षकः प्रहितो विप्राः क्रुद्धेन द्विजसूनुना।
हन्तुकामो नृपं गच्छन् ददर्श पथि काश्यपम्॥
तं तर्पयित्वा द्रविणैर्निवर्त्य विषहारिणम्।
द्विजरूपप्रतिच्छन्नः कामरूपोऽदशन्नृपम्॥ Ibid XII. 6. 11–12.

1. ब्राह्मं पाद्मं वैष्णवं च शैवं लैङ्गं सगारुडम्।
नारदीयं भागवतमाग्नेयं स्कान्दसंज्ञितम्॥
भविष्यं ब्रह्मवैवर्तं मार्कण्डेयं सवामनम्।
वाराहं मात्स्यं कौर्मं च ब्रह्माण्डाख्यमिति त्रिषट्॥ Ibid. XII. 7. 23–24.

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The eighth, ninth and tenth adhyāyas describe the life and glory of the sage Mārkandeya. The twelfth adhyāya recapitulates all that has been related in the Bhāgavata from the first Skandha onwards. The last adhyāya enumerates the number of ślokas in the eighteen Purānas and glorifies the Bhāgavata as the Purāṇa par excellence.[2]

2. Bha. P. XII. 13. 4–23

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CHAPTER III

A critical study of some legends in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

The legend of the sacrifice of Dakṣa

The primary purpose of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is to glorify Viṣṇu as the Supreme and statements like "the Vedas all treat of Bhagavān Vāsudeva, the sacrifices themselves aim at the attainment of Vāsudeva; the various yogas eventually lead to Vāsudeva and all sorts of ritual too have their end in Vāsudeva"* are only too common. The position of Śiva, in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, is somewhat uncertain. At times he is spoken of as being one and the same with Viṣṇu, at other times he is assigned a subordinate place and sometimes, though rarely, he is even spoken of as the Supreme. These various phases are clearly visible in the description of the Dakṣa sacrifice given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa version

Prajāpati Dakṣa had given his daughter Satī in marriage to Śiva. On one occasion Śiva did not rise up to greet Dakṣa when he entered the assembly of gods. This annoyed Dakṣa and a quarrel ensued between the two parties. Sometime later Dakṣa started a big sacrifice called the Bṛhaspati sacrifice to which he invited all except Śiva and Satī. Satī wanted to attend the sacrifice and went there much against Śiva's wishes. There she found that no offering was made to Śiva and that Dakṣa had ignored his son-in-law. In addition to this no one attended to her on her arrival. She grew furious and cursing her father and her own body put an end to herself.

The news of Satī's death reached Śiva who burnt with rage. He tore a tuft of hair from His head and threw it on the ground. From it sprang the terrible Vīrabhadra, who together with Śiva's attendants wrought havoc at Dakṣa's sacrifice.

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* वासुदेवपरा वेदा वासुदेवपरा मखाः।
वासुदेवपरा योगा वासुदेवपराः क्रियाः॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 28.

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The devas and ṛṣis went to Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa who explained to them that they had done wrong in not allowing Śiva to participate in the Yajña offering. Now there was only one remedy and that was to appease Lord Śiva. While describing Śiva, Brahmā talks of Him as the Supreme and as greater than all the other gods. He says "Neither I nor Yajña (the deity presiding over sacrifices) nor (any of) you nor the sages much less any other embodied being know His true character or the extent of His strength and power. None would feel inclined (under the circumstances) to contrive any means (other than clasping His feet) to placate Him who is (absolutely) independent."[1] Brahmā goes further and says "I know you to be the ruler of the universe for you are the same as the undifferentiated Brahma, the cause of both Śakti (the divine Energy or Prakṛti) and Śiva (the spirit or Puruṣa) who are severally the womb and seed of the universe."[2] "Carrying on your support through Śiva and Śakti who are essentially one, O Lord, it is you who creates, protects and swallows the universe, even as the spider evolves the cobweb, preserves it and then takes it back into its mouth."[3]

When the devas and ṛṣis headed by Brahmā prayed to Śiva He readily forgave them with a smile. The Devas thanked Śiva for His kindness and invited Him to the sacrifice. Dakṣa regained his life and looked on Śiva with reverence. He acquired wisdom and became purified in mind. The sacrifice was continued and Dakṣa sat in deep meditation. Viṣṇu appeared on the back of his Vāhana, Garuda, and after participating in the sacrifice told the assembly how He assumes three forms as Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā for the performance of certain tasks. He expounds the truth that Śiva, Brahmā and

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1. नाहं न यज्ञो न च यूयमन्ये ये देहभाजो मुनयश्च तत्त्वम् ।
विदुः प्रमाणं बलवीर्ययोर्वा यस्यात्मतन्त्रस्य क उपायं विधित्सेत् ॥
Ibid. IV. 6. 7.
2. जाने त्वामीशं विश्वस्य जगतो योनिबीजयोः ।
शक्तेः शिवस्य च परं यत्तद्ब्रह्म निरन्तरम् ॥ Ibid. IV. 6. 42.
3. त्वमेव भगवन्नेतच्छिवशक्त्योः सरूपयोः ।
विश्वं सृजसि पास्यत्सि क्रीडन्नूर्णपटो यथा ॥ Ibid. IV. 6. 43.

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He are three in one. Thus the Bhāgavata identifies Śiva with Viṣṇu here and Śiva is spoken of as Viṣṇu's equal.[1]

The Vāyu Purāṇa, the Brahma Purāṇa and many other Purāṇas contain the legend of Dakṣa's sacrifice. Though there are slight variations in details, the outline and the main incidents are the same in all.

In the Vāyu Purāṇa, for instance, it was the argument between Dadhīci and Dakṣa as to the relative superiority of Śiva and Viṣṇu that led Dakṣa to ignore Śiva during the sacrifice. But in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Dakṣa was annoyed with Śiva because of the disrespect shown by Śiva to him. The Padma Purāṇa also agrees with the Bhāgavata in this point.

The narration of the Dakṣa sacrifice as given in the Vāyu Purāṇa will not be out of place here since it will serve to bring out the differences clearly between the two descriptions.

Vāyu Purāṇa account

In the Svāyambhuva Manvantara Dakṣa had eight daughters of whom Satī, the wife of Śiva, was the eldest. Śiva or Maheśvara had no respect for his father-in-law. Once Dakṣa invited all his daughters, except Satī, to his place. Satī came to know about it and decided to go to her father, though uninvited. But on her arrival Dakṣa did not greet her even. Satī expressed her resentment at this treatment. Dakṣa then replied that Bhava was inimical towards him and that was the reason which prompted him to treat her in that manner. He further added that his other sons-in-law were more deserving of honour and respect. Satī was enraged and after informing her husband about what had happened she consigned herself to the flames. Maheśvara was terribly annoyed and cursed Dakṣa to be born again.

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1. आत्ममायां समाविश्य सोऽहं गुणमयीं द्विज ।
सृजन् रक्षन् हरन् विश्वं दधे संज्ञां क्रियोचिताम् ॥
तस्मिन् ब्रह्मण्यद्वितीये केवले परमात्मनि ।
ब्रह्मरुद्रौ च भूतानि भेदेनाज्ञोऽनुपश्यति ॥ Ibid. IV. 7. 51-52
त्रयाणां एकभावानां यो न पश्यति वै भिदाम् ।
सर्वभूतात्मनां ब्रह्मन् स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ Ibid. IV. 7. 54.

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Because of this curse Dakṣa was reborn as Prācetasa Dakṣa. Once he started a sacrificial session at the source of the river Gaṅgā. All were invited, except Śiva, and there was a huge crowd assembled. Dadhīci, however, felt that Dakṣa was adoring the undeserved and neglecting the deserved.* Turning to Dakṣa he said "Why don't you invite the venerable lord of the paśus ?" Dakṣa replied that he did not know the god Maheśvara any more than the Rudras, of whom he had seen many. In spite of Dadhīci's warning Dakṣa offered oblations to Viṣṇu as his favourite deity.

Meanwhile Umā had seen the gods going to the sacrifice and wanted to know why Śiva was not invited. Śiva told her that under the arrangement made by the Suras (सुराः) there was no provision for his portion in the oblations offered in all the sacrifices.† Umā was pained at this news and took the whole affair as a mark of disrespect shown to her husband. Śiva tried to convince her but in vain. Umā rebuked Śiva saying that he knew well only to praise himself in the assembly of women. The taunt had its effect and Śiva in his wrath created Vīrabhadra and commissioned him to destroy the sacrifice of Dakṣa. Vīrabhadra with his host of Rudras raided Dakṣa's sacrifice and destroyed it completely. The gods and Dakṣa then prayed to Śiva who readily forgave them.

The description of Vīrabhadra as huge, hideous and monstrous is given in all the Purāṇas. The exploits of Vīrabhadra and his followers are specified clearly in the Liṅga, Kūrma and the Bhāgavata Purāṇas. Indra is knocked down and trampled on : Yama has his staff broken : Sarasvatī and the Mātris have their noses cut off; Mitra or Bhaga has his eyes pulled out; Pūṣan has his teeth knocked down his throat; Candra is pumelled; Vahṇi's hands are cut off; Bhṛgu loses his beard; the Brāhmaṇas are pelted with stones; the Prajāpatis are beaten

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* अपूज्य पूजने चैव पूज्यानां चाप्यपूजने ।
नरः पापं अवाप्नोति महद्वै नात्र संशयः ॥ Vāyu. P.

† सुरैरेव महाभागे सर्वमेतदनुष्ठितम् ।
यज्ञेषु मम सर्वेषु न भाग उपकल्पिताः ॥

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and the gods and the demigods are run through with swords or struck with arrows.

Account in Vedic Literature

The main features of Dakṣa's story are found in the Vedic literature. Dakṣa is mentioned several times in the Ṛgveda. He is known to the Brāhmaṇas as a Prajāpati and as a sacrificer. The account of the Dākṣāyanī sacrifice, so called because it was first performed by Prajāpati Dakṣa, is described in the Śatapatha and Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇas. The exclusion of Rudra from Dakṣa's sacrifice is also found in the Veda but the cause for Rudra's destruction of the sacrifice is there quite different. The reason there given is that Prajāpati Dakṣa had intercourse with his daughter Uṣas and to remedy the evil effects of this the gods created a new being out of their fearful forms. This new being was the Bhūtavān (i.e. Rudra) who was commanded to pierce Prajāpati and he accordingly carried out the behests of his creators. In the Veda there is no reference to Rudra's marriage with Dakṣa's daughter.

Rāmāyaṇa account.

The story of Dakṣa's sacrifice is told perhaps in its simplest form in the Rāmāyaṇa.[1] Muir translates the passage as follows :—"Janaka, being thus addressed replied to the great muni; 'Hear, regarding this bow from what cause it is here. A king called Devarāta was the sixth in descent from Nimi. This (bow) was a deposit committed to the hands of this great personage. Formerly at the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, the heroic Rudra when he had drawn his bow and routed the gods thus spake in derision : Since you gods you have decided to give me no portion though I desired it, I cut off your principal and most precious limbs with my bow,[2] etc. etc. Then all the deities being distressed propitiated the god of gods who became favourable to them and restored the limbs of

1. Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa I. 66. 7 ff.
2. यस्मात् भागार्थिनो भागान् नाकलपयत मे सुरा ।
वराङ्गानि महार्हाणि धनुषा शातयामि वः ॥ Etc. Etc.

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those glorious beings which had been cut off by the mighty bow. This is the precious bow of the great deity which was at that time deposited with our ancestor."

In the Rāmāyaṇa version of the story there is no mention of Rudra creating Vīrabhadra to destroy the sacrifice. He is simply said to wound the gods with bow. But in many places in the Rāmāyaṇa the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice is alluded to. Rāmāyaṇa III. 30. 36,[1] VI. 54. 33[2] refer to the sacrifice and III. 31. 10.[3] refers to Rudra's followers when it says that "This son of an eminent man i.e. Rāma, was surrounded by these horrible Rākṣasas like Mahādeva by his attendant hosts in a cemetery." And again in Rāmāyaṇa V. 12. 39[4] Śiva is called the god of demons.

Mahābhārata account

The Dakṣa sacrifice is described at great length in the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata and is also found in other places. In the first account the sacrifice is connected with the origin of Fever or Jvara.

The account is as follows :—Umā, Śiva's wife, seeing the gods passing by in chariots, enquired of her husband where they were going and was told that they were proceeding to Dakṣa's horse–sacrifice. To Umā's query as to why he did not attend the sacrifice, Śiva replied "The former practice of the gods has been that in all sacrifices no portion should be divided to me. By custom arising out of early arrangements the gods lawfully (dharmataḥ) allot me no share in the sacrifice." Umā got annoyed and taunted by her Śiva went to the sacrifice with his attendants and put an end to it. The sacrifice took the form of a deer and was followed by Śiva to the sky. A drop

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1. तं दृष्ट्वा तेजसा युक्तं विव्यथुर्वनदेवताः ।
दक्षस्येव क्रतुं हन्तुं उद्यतास्त्रं पिनाकिनम् ॥ Rāmā. III. 30. 36.
2. ततो विस्फारयामास रामस्तद् धनुरुत्तमम् ।
भगवान् इव संक्रुद्धो भवः क्रतुजिघांसया ॥ Ibid. VI. 54. 33.
3. स तैः परिवृतो घोरैरराक्षसैर् नृवरात्मजः ।
महादेव पितृवने गणैः पार्श्वगतैरिव ॥ Ibid. III. 31. 10.
4. गृहं भूतपतेरिव । Ibid. V. 12. 39.

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of sweat fell from Śiva's forehead from which a fire proceeded and out of which again a formidable being was born. This being was Jvara (Fever) which burnt up the sacrifice, put the gods to flight etc. Brahmā then appeared before Śiva and promised that the gods shall give him a share in the sacrifice in future.* Jvara was allowed to range on the earth and Śiva was propitiated.

Another version in the Mahābhārata itself runs as follows : "Dakṣa formerly commenced a sacrifice at Gaṅgādvāra in the Himālayas which was attended by different divine beings including Indra and Brahmā. Dadhīci, a votary of Rudra, was indignant at the absence of any offering to Rudra and said : "This is no sacrifice, nor a legitimate ceremony in which Rudra is not worshipped. (These gods) have become entangled in the bonds of destruction. Is this the adverse influence of time or is it through delusion that they do not see that ruin is at hand ? They perceive not that a great calamity is impending at the sacrifice." Having spoken thus Dadhīci saw with the eye of contemplation Mahādeva and his auspicious goddess and close to her the sage Nārada. Dakṣa in his reply to Dadhīci says that 'We have many Rudras armed with tridents and wearing braided hair who occupy eleven places. I know not Maheśvara.[1] The rest of the narrative is the same as that of the Vāyu Purāṇa.

It is interesting to note that there is a spot in Haridvāra (Gaṅgādvāra) which is celebrated as the place of Dakṣa's sacrifice.

The Kūrma Purāṇa contains the discussion between Dakṣa and Dadhīci and their dialogue contains some interesting matter. Dakṣa, for instance, states that no portion of a sacrifice is ever allotted to Śiva and no prayers are directed to be addressed to

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* भवतोऽहि सुराः सर्वे भागं दास्यन्ति वै प्रभो
... ...

Etc. MBH. Śāntiparva.

1. सन्ति नो बहवो रुद्राः शूलहस्ताः कपर्दिनः ।
एकादशस्थानगता नाहं वेद्मि महेश्वरम् ॥ MBH.

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him or to his bride.[1] Dadhīci apparently evades the objection and demands a share for Rudra who is one with the sun and who is mentioned many times in the Veda.[2] In reply to this Dakṣa says that the twelve Ādityas receive special oblations and that they are all the suns he knows of and that he knows no other sun. The munis who are present there concur in his sentiments.[3] These ideas seem to have undergone a change by the time of the Padma and Bhāgavata Purāṇas as these place Dakṣa's neglect of Śiva to the latter's filthy practices like going naked, smearing himself with ashes etc.

Interpretation of the Dakṣa sacrifice

The Dakṣa yajña has been interpreted in various ways by different scholars. Thus Signor Gorresio in note 35, p. 291 of the tenth volume of his Rāmāyaṇa, on the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice says :—"It appears to me that in this fact the struggle of the ancient religions of India is represented under a mythical veil. Śiva (a deity, of the Cushite or Hamitic tribes) wished to have a part in the worship of the conquerors and in their sacrifices from which he was excluded, and by disturbing their rites and by a display of violence at their sacrifices he succeeded in being admitted to participate in them."

The usual explanation given is that the struggle represents the quarrel between the worshippers of Viṣṇu, on the one hand and those of Śiva on the other. Thus Wilson remarks that the Dakṣa sacrifice is intended to intimate a struggle between the worshippers of Śiva and Viṣṇu in which at first the latter but finally the former acquired ascendancy.

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1. सर्वेष्वेव हि यज्ञेषु न भागः परिकल्पितः ।
   न मन्त्रा भार्यया सार्द्धं शङ्करस्येति नेष्यते ॥ Kūr. P,
2. स स्तूयते सहस्रांशुः सामगाध्वर्युहोत्रिभिः ।
   पश्यैनं विश्वकर्माणं रुद्रं मूर्तित्रयीमयम् ॥ Ibid.
3. ये एते द्वादशादित्या आदित्ययज्ञ भागिनः ।
   सर्वे सूर्या इति ज्ञेया न हि अन्यो विद्यते रवि ॥
   एवं उक्ते तु मुनयः समायाता दिदृक्षवः ।
   वाढं इत्यब्रुवन् दक्षं तस्य साहाय्यकारिणः ॥ Ibid.

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While discussing the significance of the sacrifice of Dakṣa the words of Dakṣa himself are noteworthy. Thus he says :— "We have many Rudras armed with lances and bearing matted locks on their heads. They are eleven in number; I know them all but I do not know who this Maheśvara is." (Quoted above). Apparently Dakṣa refuses to recognize Śiva as the leader of the eleven Rudras.

This raises the question of the identity of Rudra and Śiva. It will be useful to consider what two eminent scholars like Wilson and Whitney have to say on this subject. The remarks of Prof. Wilson are taken from the 'Introductions to the first and second volumes of his translation of the Ṛgveda':—

Rudra and Śiva

"We have a Rudra who in after times is identified with Śiva but who, even in the Purāṇas, is of very different origin and identification; whilest in the Veda he is described as the father of the winds and is evidentiy a form of either Agni or Indra. The epithet 'Kapardin' which is applied to him appears indeed to have some relation to the characteristic attribute of Śiva— the wearing of his hair in a peculiar braid : but the term has probably in the Veda a very different signification—one now forgotten. At any rate no other epithet applicable to Śiva occurs and there is not the slightest allusion to the form in which, for the last ten centuries at least he seems to have been almost exclusively worshipped in India, that of the Liṅga or phallus." (Vol. I. pp. XXVI, XXVII).

The following are the remarks of Prof. Whitney from the Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol. III p. 318.

"Rudra's chief interest consists in the circumstances that he forms the point of connection between the Vedic religion and the later Śiva worship. Śiva is a god unknown to the Vedas; his name is a word of not unfrequent occurence in the hymns but simply means propitious; not even in the Atharva-veda is it the epithet of a particular divinity or distinguished by its usage from any other adjective. As given to him whose title it has since become, it seems one of those euphemisms so

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frequent in the Indian religion, applied as a soothing and flattering address to the most terrible god in the whole pantheon. The precise relation between Rudra and Śiva is not yet satisfactorily traced out. The introduction of an entirely new divinity from the mountains of the North has been supposed, who was grated upon the ancient religion by being identified with Rudra and again a lending of some of Agni's attributes with those of Rudra to originate a new development; perhaps neither of these may be necessary. Śiva may be a local form of Rudra arisen under the influence of peculiar climatic relations in the districts from which he made his way into Hindustan proper, introduced among and readily accepted by a people, which, as the Atharvaveda shows, was strongly tending towards a terrorism of its religion."

Doubts as to the identity of Śiva and Rudra is a long discussed problem and the opinion is gaining strength that both Rudra and Śiva were originally different deities later on amalgamated into one.

It is probable that the Vedic Rudra had a parallel in some aboriginal god "to whom tapas and similar occult powers such as those of the primitive yoga were congenial and the cultural contacts with these tribes probably led the Āryan thinkers to absorb some of their beliefs and they found in Rudra the capacity to absorb such elements."

Śiva as a non-Āryan god

The description of Śiva in the different Purāṇas suggests that the deity was originally a non-Āryan god. Thus in the Skanda Purāṇa Kedāra Khāṇda Śiva is described as anāryaḥ, anāryas-aṅgaḥ. Again Dakṣa says (as given above) that no portion of a sacrifice is ever allotted to Śiva and no prayers are directed to be addressed to him. The Dakṣa sacrifice is given in the Sauptikaparvan of the Mahābhārata and there it is said that "the gods themselves decided who should have a part of the sacrifice. And the gods not knowing Rudra (Śiva) intimately did not give him anything."[1] Thus the Āryan gods were right

1 MBH. Saupti. X. 18. 3.
ता वै रुद्रमजानन्त्यो याथातथ्येन देवताः ।
नाकल्पयन्त देवस्य स्थाणोर्भागं नराधिप ॥

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in ignoring the non-Āryan Śiva. And they were not to blame if Śiva as a non-Āryan was excluded from their sacrifices.

But Śiva had his own case i. e, he was not invited ot the sacrifice in spite of being the son-in-law of Dakṣa, a Prajāpati. The marriage of Satī and Śiva is an instance of inter-marriage between two communities and as it sometimes happens in intermarriages we find Dakṣa regretting this union. He says—"To this haughty and impure person who has not only abandoned all pious acts but has outstepped all bounds of propriety I gave away the girl, though unwilling to do so. Surrounded by spirits and troops of ghosts, with his hair scattered about, now laughing and now crying, he roves about uncovered like a mad man in frightful crematories. Bathed in the ashes of funeral piles and adorned with a garland of skulls and wearing ornaments of human bones, he is really inauspicious though bearing the appellation of Śiva. Ever drunk (himself) he is fond of drunken people and is the lord of goblins and ghosts who are purely tāmasic by nature. At the instance of Brahmā alas ! I gave away my virtuous girl to such an impure and evil-minded person, the lord of ghosts."[1]

Moreover the description of the destruction of the sacrifice by Śiva's followers has a non-Āryan touch about it. Nowhere else has the quarrel between two parties descended to such low and indecent behaviour. Be it a war between the asuras and devas or the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war or still again the Mahābhārata war we find only two sides fighting with each other in the right style of war. But in the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice by Śiva's followers they are described as smashing the

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1 लुप्तक्रियायाशुचये मानिने भिन्नसेतवे ।
अनिच्छन्नप्यदां बालां शूद्रायेवोशतीं गिरम् ॥
प्रेतावासेषु घोरेषु प्रेतैर्भूतगणैर्वृतः ।
अटत्युन्मत्तवन्नग्नो व्युप्तकेशो हसन् रुदन् ॥
चिताभस्मकृतस्नानः प्रेतस्रङ्नस्थिभूषणः ।
शिवापदेशो ह्यशिवो मत्तो मत्तजनप्रियः ॥
पतिः प्रमथभूतानां तमोमात्रात्मकात्मनाम् ।
तस्मा उन्मादनाथाय नष्टशौचाय दुर्हृदे ।
दत्ता वत मया साध्वी चोदिते परमेष्ठिना ॥ Bhā. P. IV. 2. 13–16.

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sacrificial vessels, extinguishing the sacred fires and worst of all urinating in the sacrificial pits.[1]

Śiva's association with Bhūtas etc.

The Bhāgavata, Vāyu and other Purāṇas associate Śiva with Bhūtas, Piśācas and Rākṣasas. D. R. Patil has described these followers in detail in his "Cultural history from the Vāyu Purāṇa." It will be useful to reproduce them here. Thus :— "Śiva and Umā enjoyed their stay in the Umāvana in the company of the Bhūtas.[2] The Bhūtas entertain Śiva with dance and music by playing on various instruments. The Bhūtas, residing at Bhūtavata, a mansion of Śiva, have faces of various animals and hairy skin. They adore Śiva in various forms.[3] Bhūtī (or Bhūtā) the wife of Kaśyapa, gave birth to the Bhūtas who were the followers of Rudra. The mention of Bhūtā or Bhūtī as the wife of Kaśyapa also proves that intercommunity marriages were quite common. Thus Kaśyapa, a brahman, is described as married to Bhūtī, a non-Āryan. It will be interesting to recollect that Rāvaṇa's father, Viśravasa, was a brahman. Thus the marriage of Śiva and Satī was just another instance of intercommunity marriage. The Bhūtas had various forms mostly hideous and are called terrible like the Rākṣasas with skulls in their hands, horrible and crooked. They have neither wives nor children and are always Ūrdhvaretas. Śiva is called the consecrated lord of the Bhūtas and Piśācas."

Śiva is called the lord of the Rākṣasas. "Hundreds of the gaṇas of the Rākṣasas follow (anucaranti) Śaṅkara, the lord of the world. The Nairṛta Rākṣasas adore Tryambaka. In the story of the destruction of Varāṇasi we find Kṣemaka, an attendant of Śiva, mentioned as a Rākṣasa. In a mantra addressed to Śiva he is styled an asura.[4]

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1. रुरुजुर्यज्ञपात्राणि तथैकेऽग्नीननाशयन् ।
कुण्डेष्वमूत्रयन् केचित् विभिदुर्वेदिमेखलाः ॥ Ibid. IV. 5. 15.
2. Vāyu. P. 41. 32–36.
3. Ibid. 30. 89.
4. त्वमग्ने रुद्रो असुरो महो दिवस्त्वं शर्द्धो मारुतं पृक्ष ईशिरे ।
etc. Ibid. 21. 71.

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Sūktas VII. 18; VII. 19 and VII. 33 of the Ṛgveda contain a description of the daśarājña fight (the fight with the ten kings). Sūkta VII. 18 is in praise of Indra and describes how "Indra enabled king Sudāsa Paijavana to overcome his enemies in this daśarājña fight, though hard pressed by them." Here there is a verse which is significant. It says "The Pakhtas, the Bhalānas, the Alinas, the Viṣāṇins and Śivas made noise but he (Indra) exhilarated (with Soma) brought back the cows of the Ārya (Sudāsa) to the Tritsus and fought with their men." [1] As C. V. Vaidya and other scholars point out, it is probable that the word Pakhtas, Bhalānas and others denote five non-Āryan tribes who assisted the five Āryan kings against Sudāsa on the bank of Paruṣṇī.

The word Śivāsaḥ occurring in the above verse i. e. RV. VI. 8. 7. is noteworthy. Could it be that they were a tribe worshipping Śiva and called after the chief they worship? The non-Āryan origin of Śiva lends support to this belief. Another factor in determining Śiva's non-Āryan character is his association with Yoga. Thus the stomach of Śiva is described as the home of Siddha yogas. [2] Wherever Śiva is described he is spoken of as a yogī and in the Vāyu Purāṇa [3] we are told that Śiva practised yoga on this earth in the Haimakavana. So also Śiva is said to destroy this world through his yoga māyā [4] 'The Lord of Yoga' is a very common attribute of Śiva in the Purāṇas.

The gaṇas of Śiva and the significance of the term gaṇa

In the Vāmana Purāṇa there is a description of the various gaṇas of Śiva like Rudras, Skandas, Naigameyas, Pāśupatas, Vṛṣadhvajinas etc., and Śiva is described as the lord of the gaṇas. Elsewhere also we find mention of the gaṇa as an organisation of a community somewhat like a democracy. Thus in the Vāyu Purāṇa there is a reference to the Saimhikeya

1. RV. VI. 8. 7.
2. Vāyu. P. 24- 151.
3. Ibid. 23. 155-157.
4. Ibid. 66. 145.

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gaṇa of Daityas, which was ten thousand strong.[1] They were the descendants of the fourteen sons of Simhikā who was the wife of the Daitya Vipracitti. Again the Yātudhānas, Brahmadhānas and Vārtas were the three gaṇas of Rākṣasas who were active in the daytime (divācaraḥ) and "those who wandered about in the night time were known by the four gaṇas of Paulastyas, Nairṛtas, Āgastyas and Kauśikas. Yet again Rāma is described as having killed Rāvaṇa together with his gaṇas. "In almost all these instances gaṇa appears to denote a sort of organisation."

In the Vāyu Purāṇa[2] there is reference to the gaṇas which indicate that they were a sort of democratic institutions or organisations. Thus it says that once the sages had some business to be transacted. So they assembled on the Meru mountain and resolved thus. 'This is our resolution (samayo naḥ prakīrtitaḥ) that whosoever does not turn up here within a period of seven nights from today shall be deemed to have incurred the sin of the murder of a brahmin.' This sounds like a parliamentary meeting. As announced, all the sages with their gaṇas were present on the occasion except Vaiśampāyana. From what is described here it may be that there were independent republics called gaṇas in ancient times with their respective elected heads called gaṇapatis. That Republics were not new in ancient India is amply proved by Śrī K. P. Jayaswal in his book on 'Hindu Polity'. Passages like RV. X. 173. 1; AV. VI. 87. 1; AV. VI. 88. 3; AV. III. 4. 2 etc. prove that the people had the right to elect their own kings. By the fourth century B. C. we have positive evidence that democratic governments existed in the country. Thus Megasthenes records the tradition 'sovereignty was dissolved and democratic governments set up' in various places.[3] In all probability, therefore, the form of government over which Śiva presided was a republican one. For, as is well known,

1. दशान्यानि सहस्राणि सैंहिकेयो गणः स्मृतः ॥
2. Ibid. 61. 12 ff.
3. Epitome of Megasthenes Diod. II. 38; Mc Crindle, Megasthenes pp. 38, 40.

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Śiva's followers were invariably called his gaṇas. Hence it is not unreasonable to suppose Śiva as head of a republican state. This can be called the non-Āryan system as apposed to the Āryan where monarchy was the rule. As Jayaswal amply illustrates we known that the Vedas knew only monarchy. It can be said that the quarrel between Dakṣa and Śiva was a political rather than a religious one. When Dakṣa, the monarch, held a sacrifice he declined to invite his rival or enemy Śiva, the head of the republican state, who was also his son-in-law. This flagrant display of enmity embittered Śiva which led to the bitter struggle and chaos at the end. This bitter quarrel between the two parties has survived in the form of a legend–the legend of the sacrifice of Dakṣa.

The legend of S'unahśepa

Bhāgavata Purāṇa account

Hariścandra was the son of Tṛśaṅku and he had no issue for a very long time. On the advice of Nārada he propitiated Varuṇa and through his grace a son was born to him and the child was called Rohita. But no sooner was the child born than Varuṇa appeared before the king and wanted the boy to be sacrificed as a propitiation to him. The king promised to sacrifice his son after ten days. But when the ten days were over the king promised to sacrifice him as soon as he had teethed. Thus every time Hariścandra put off Varuṇa with some excuse and finally Rohita who had grown up by then and who learnt about the sacrifice went away to the forest with his bow in hand. But the anger of Varuṇa who learnt about Rohita's departure visited Hariścandra in the form of the disease of dropsy. Rohita heard about his father's disease and decided to return home. But every time he determined to do so Indra appeared before him and advised him to atone for his father's sin by visiting all the sacred places instead of being killed. But finally Rohita decided to see his father and while on his way bought from Ajīgarta (a sage of the Bhṛgu family) his middle son Śunaḥśepa, to be sacrificed in his stead to Varuṇa. In the sacrifice which was arranged by Hariścandra and in which Śunaḥśepa was intended as the victim Viśvāmitra officia-

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ted as the Brahmā and the sage Agastya as the Udgātā. Śunaḥśepa sought protection from Viśvāmitra and extolled a number of gods. As a result, the bonds which bound him to the stake broke loose and he became free. He was then adopted by Viśvāmitra as his son and was call Devarāta. (Given by the gods).

This is the story as given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and it is related in two parts. The first part up to 'Śunaḥśepa's deliverance from the stakes is related in IX. 7. 6–25 and the second part up to his adoption by Viśvāmitra in IX. 16. 28–36.

Reference to S'unahs'epa in other works

The earliest reference to Śunaḥśepa is in the Ṛgveda. Here he is a sage and as many as eight hymns are ascribed to him. These are RV. I. 24 to I. 30 (7 hymns) comprising about 97 verses and RV. IX. 3 which has ten verses. Thus in all there are about 106 verses to his credit in the Ṛgveda.

In three mantras Śunaḥśepa is referred to by name i. e. in RV. I. 24. 12 and 13 and RV. V. 2. 7. In the first two of these mantras he is spoken of as in bonds and in the last, which is attributed to some other sage and which is addressed to Agni, he is said to have been released by Agni from the thousand stakes. But some scholars are of the opinion that RV. I. 24. 12 and 13 are interpolations.

The Taittirīya Samhitā alludes to the Śunaḥśepa legend in 5.2.1.3.[1] It says that Śunaḥśepa was seized by Varuṇa and was released when he praised him with the mantra "Udūttamam..."

The Kāṭhaka Samhitā[2] and the Kapiṣṭhala Kāṭha Samhitā have the same version as the Taittirīya Samhitā.

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1. पर्यावर्तते दक्षिणा पर्यावर्तते स्वमेव वीर्यमनु पर्यावर्तते तस्माद्दक्षिणोऽर्ध आत्मनो वीर्यावत्तरोऽथो आदित्यस्यैवाऽऽवृतमनुपर्यावर्तते शुनः शेपमाजीगर्ति वरुणोऽगृह्णात्स एतां वरुणीमपश्यत्तया वै स आत्मानं वरुणपाशादमुञ्चद्वरुणो वा एतं गृह्णाति य उखां प्रतिमुञ्चत उदुत्तमं वरुण पाशमस्मदित्याहाऽऽत्मानमेवैतया ॥

Taitt. Sam. 5. 2. 1. 3.

2. .....एवैतया प्रियं धामावरुन्धेऽग्नेऽभ्यावर्तिन्नग्ने अङ्गिरः पुनरूर्जा सह रय्येति पुनरेति तस्माद्ग्राम्याः पशवस्सायमरण्याद्ग्राममायान्ति चतसृभिश्च-

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The Atharvaveda attributes two hymns to Śunaḥśepa.[1] One is addressed to Varuṇa praying for relief from fetters. This prayer is also believed to be a remedy for dropsy. The third verse of this hymn is the same as RV. I. 24. 15.

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa account

It is in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa[2] that we get a description of the Śunaḥśepa legend in detail and which seems to have formed the basis for the later versions in the epics and the Purāṇas.

Here it is said that Hariścandra, who was childless, wondering why everyone wanted to have a son, asked Nārada about it. Nārada enumerated the merits of a son in ten gāthās and advised Hariścandra to propitiate Varuṇa and obtain a son promising to sacrifice that son to him. The son Rohita was born but the king did not want to sacrifice him. He kept on postponing it till the boy who had grown up learnt about it and went away to the forest with bow in hand.

Meanwhile Hariścandra was attacked by dropsy through Varuṇa's annoyance. Rohita hearing about it wanted to come back but was prevented from it by Indra who exhorted him to keep on wandering. In the sixth year of his wanderings Rohita met the sage Ajīgarta starving along with his three sons, Śunaḥpuccha, Śunaḥśepa and Śūnolāṅgūla. On offering a hundred cows the sage parted with Śunaḥśepa and Rohita brought him to be sacrificed in his stead. Varuṇa agreed to the change.

Ṛṣi Jamadagni who acted as the Adhvaryu refused to tie the victim to the stake and sacrifice him. Ajīgarta, the father of the boy, came again and offered to bind him to the stake for a hundred more and to cut him up with a knife for a third hundred cows. Śunaḥśepa lost faith in human beings and started singing in praise of the different deities Agni, Savitar,

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तुष्पादा हि आ त्वाहार्षमित्या ह्येनं हरति विशस्त्वा सर्वा वाञ्छन्त्वस्मै भवत्युदुत्तमं वरुण पाशमस्मदिति शुनश्शेपो वा एतामाजीगर्तिर्वरुणगृहीतोऽपश्यत्तया वै स वरुणपाशादमुच्यत वरुणपाशमेवैतया प्रमुञ्चते etc. Kāṭha. Sam. 19, 11.

1. AV. VI. 25. 1–3. AV. VII. 88. 1–4.
2. Aita. Brāh. VII. 13–18.

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Varuṇa, Viśvedevas, Indra, Aśvins and Uṣas. Indra presented a golden chariot to Śunaḥśepa. While the praise of Uṣas in three verses was being sung the fetters fell off one by one and Śunaḥśepa became free. Hariścandra also was cured of his disease.

Śunaḥśepa was invited to perform the closing rite called the abhiṣecanīya. In this ceremony Śunaḥśepa saw by intuition an improved method of pressing the Soma called the 'añjassava.' Viśvāmitra then adopted Śunaḥśepa as his son and asked his hundred sons to treat Śunaḥśepa as the eldest. Madhucchandas was midmost of the sons in age. The fifty elder brothers objected to Viśvāmitra's proposal and were cursed by him. But the fifty younger ones readily agreed.

H. G. Narahari discussing the Śunaḥśepa legend in Kaṇe's 'Studies in Indology' identifies the different verses in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa with those attributed to Śunaḥśepa in the Ṛgveda. Śunaḥśepa's call to Prajāpati is identified with RV. I. 24. 1 and that to Agni with RV. I. 24. 2. The Savitṛ praise is equated to RV. I. 24. 3–5 and Varuṇa is addressed in RV. I. 24. 6–15; I. 25. 1–21; and Agni again is addressed in RV. I. 26; I. 27. 1–12. The Viśvedevas are praised in RV. I. 27. 13 and Indra in RV. I. 29; I. 30. 1–16. Ṛgveda I. 30. 17–19 are offered to the Aśvins and RV. I. 30. 20–22 to Uṣas. Śunaḥśepa is reported as preparing Soma with verses which are the same as RV. I. 28. 5–8 and RV. I. 28. 9. The sacrifice of the Soma is done while reciting RV. I. 28. 1–4. "The two verses which the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa regards as being recited by Śunaḥśepa at the time of the Avabhṛta ceremony and the verse used by him in summoning Hariścandra to the Āhavanīya fire are nothing else than RV. IV. 1. 4–5 and RV. V. 2. 7. respectively."

These conclusions are rather far fetched. The nature of some of the Ṛgvedic hymns do not allow the probability of their being uttered by a victim about to be killed. Thus Ṛgveda I. 29 contains the refrain "Let us hope, O generously giving Indra, for a thousand shining oxen and horses." [1] Surely a man about to be killed does not ask for shining oxen and horses. Again RV. I. 24 contains verses which say "He whom Śunaḥ-

1. RV. I. 29. refrain.

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śepa invoked when he was seized, the king Varuṇa, may he deliver us;" and Śunaḥśepa, indeed, when he was seized and bound to these stakes invoked the Āditya." When Śunaḥśepa himself is invoking the deities it is impossible to reconcile the above statements in the past tense.

Probably there was a Ṛṣi Śunaḥśepa in Ṛgvedic times to whom these hymns were attributed and when the Śunaḥśepa legend grew in the Brāhmaṇas the hymns were also added due to the similiarity in name.

In the Ṛgveda there is only a reference to the deliverance of Śunaḥśepa from the Pāśa. By the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa we get a harmonious legend of Śunaḥśepa probably by adding what is suggestive in the Ṛgvedic hymns attributed to Śunaḥśepa and partly by popular imagination.

Saṅkhyāyana S'rautasūtra account

The Sāṅkhyāyana Śrautasūtra has the legend as found in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa with a little difference. The period of the wanderings of Rohita is here mentioned as seven years whereas in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa it is six years. Here again Ajīgarta is represented as eating his own son when Rohita met him. This only illustrates what the passage of time does to any story. Moreover in the Śrautasūtra Śunaḥśepa sees the añjassava as soon as he was free whereas in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa he does so only after the invitation of the priests.

Reference in the Nirukta

The Nirukta does not deal with the Śunaḥśepa legend but the name Śunaḥśepa occurs in connection with selling boys for money.[1] It is said that women are not entitled to inheritance as they are given away, sold or abandoned, which things are not done in the case of men. Here Yāska points out that all these three actions relate to men as well as in the case of Śunaḥśepa.

1. पुंसोऽपीत्येके शौनः शेपे दर्शनात् ॥ Nirukta. III. 4. 4. Under Nirukta II. 13. relating to the synonymns of the sun and the sky Yāska says 'अथापि वरुणस्यैकस्यैकस्य' । 'अथा वयं आदित्य व्रते तव' This occurs in the famous Varuṇa prayer RV. I. 24.

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Bṛhaddevatā

The Bṛhaddevatā, whose author is Śaunaka, mentions the name Śunaḥśepa in three places–twice in the introduction and once in the body of the text, while describing the gods of the Ṛgveda.[1]

Sarvanukramaṇi

In the Sarvānukramaṇī of Kātyāyana Śunaḥśepa is described as the son of Ajīgarta and the adopted son of Viśvāmitra.[2]

Vāsiṣtha Dharmas'āstra

The Vāsiṣṭha Dharmaśāstra is considered one of the most ancient works on Hindu law. Discussing the various kinds of sons this Śāstra classifies them into twelve kinds, six of whom are entitled to inheritance and the other six not entitled. Among the latter type is mentioned Śunaḥśepa as an example of a son who is bought for price and a son who approaches by himself.

Manusmṛti

The Manuṣmṛti refers to Ajīgarta who was prepared to slay his own son as he was starving.[3]

Ṣadguruśiṣya, who wrote a commentary on Kātyāyana's Sarvānukramaṇī (1187 A. D.) and Sāyaṇa who wrote the Ṛgvedic bhāṣya, both refer to the Śunaḥśepa legend.

We now come to the epic period. In the Rāmāyaṇa the Śunaḥśepa story is given in a different form.

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1. नमस्कारश्शुनश्शेपे नमस्तेऽस्तु विधुते ।
सङ्कल्पयन्निदं तुलयोऽहं स्यामिति यदुच्यते ॥ BD. 1. 54.
शुनश्शेपं नराशंसं द्यावा नः पृथिवीति च ।
निरस्कृतेति प्रभृतिष्वर्थादासीत् क्रमो यथा ॥ Ibid. 2. 115.
स्तूयमानश्शश्वद् इति प्रीतस्तु मनसा ददौ ।
शुनश्शेपाय दिव्यं तु रथं सर्वं हिरण्मयम् ॥ Ibid. 3. 103.

2. कस्य पञ्चोनाजोगर्तिः शुनः शेपः स कृत्रिमो वैश्वामित्रो देवरातः ॥
Sarvānu. Ed. by Macdonell. pp. 6–7.

3. अजीगर्तिः सुतं हन्तुमुपासर्पद्बुभुक्षितः ।
न चालिप्यत पापेन क्षुत्प्रतीकारमाचरन् ॥ Manu Smṛ. X. 105.

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Ramāyaṇa account

Once Viśvāmitra was practising penance at the Puṣkara and at the same time king Ambarīṣa of Ayodhyā started a sacrifice. The victim of the sacrifice was carried away by Indra and the priest accused Ambarīṣa and demanded the victim to be brought back or to provide a human being instead. The king searched everywhere and reached the top of the Bhṛgu mountain where he met sage Ṛcīka with his wife and three sons. He asked the sage to part with one of his sons for 100,000 cows. The father wanted the eldest and the mother the youngest so the middle son Śunaḥśepa offered to go. Ambarīṣa was delighted and took Śunaḥśepa with him. On the way the party halted at Puṣkara and Śunaḥśepa there saw his maternal uncle and falling at his feet asked for protection. Consoling Śunaḥśepa Viśvāmitra asked his sons to go as victims but they refused and were cursed by their father. Viśvāmitra then told Śunaḥśepa "When you are bound to the Yūpa, after being decked with red garlands and unguents, just address Agni and sing two songs. You will then succeed." He taught him the two gāthās. Śunaḥśepa acted accordingly and praised the two gods Indra and Viṣṇu. Indra was pleased and granted him long life and the sacrifice ended happily. King Ambarīṣa was also benefitted and sage Viśvāmitra continued his penance for thousand years.

The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa version and the Rāmāyaṇa version of the legend differ considerably in details. Whereas in the Brāhmaṇa Hariścandra because of his son Rohita tried to sacrifice Śunaḥśepa, the son of Ajigarta, in order to appease Varuṇa's anger, in the Rāmāyaṇa king Ambarīṣa, because the sacrificial victim was stolen, tried to sacrifice Śunaḥśepa, the son of Ṛcīka, in order to appease the gods. In the Brāhmaṇa Viśvāmitra is just present at the sacrifice as a priest and is not related to Śunaḥśepa. But in the Rāmāyaṇa he is the uncle of Śunaḥśepa and comes into the picture before the sacrifice and does not attend the sacrifice. Again Śunaḥśepa praises the various gods on his own initiative in the Brāhmaṇa but in the Rāmāyaṇa Viśvāmitra teaches him two gāthās whose recitation at the proper time saves him. The cursing of Viśvāmitra's sons

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occurs after the sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa and also because of not accepting Śunaḥśepa as their elder brother. Also only fifty of the hundred sons are cursed. But in the Rāmāyaṇa the curse is pronounced on all the sons before the sacrifice and because they refused to take the place of Śunaḥśepa as the victim at the sacrifice. Moreover the Rāmāyaṇa does not inform us what became of Śunaḥśepa afterwards. These differences were probably due to the different versions current among the people. Thus there was probably a Vaidika tradition which is recorded in the version of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. On the other hand there were possibly different stories or versions of the same story current among the people which we might term the Paurāṇika tradition. The variations which occur in the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Harivamśa and the Purāṇas were probably influenced by these different versions popular among the people.

Mahābhārata account

In the Anuśāsanaparva of the Mahābhārata there is a description of the exploits of sage Viśvāmitra and the deliverance of Śunaḥśepa is mentioned as one of his achievements.[1] "A man of great austerities, Śunaḥśepa, son of Ṛcīka, was liberated (by Viśvāmitra) from the sacrifice though bound as the victim. And he (Śunaḥśepa) in that sacrifice performed by Hariścandra pleased the gods by his own brilliance and became the son of the wise Viśvāmitra. But the fifty sons would not greet Devarāta as the eldest and were cursed to the state of cooking dog's flesh etc."

Both the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata speak of Śunaḥśepa as the son of Ṛcīka whereas the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa describes him as Ajīgarta's son. But the Mahābhārata agrees

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1 ऋचीकस्यात्मजश्चैव शुनश्शेपो महातपाः ।
विमोक्षितो महासत्रात् पशुतां अप्युपागतः ॥
हरिश्चन्द्रकृतौ देवांस्तोषयित्वात्मतेजसा ।
पुत्रतां अनुसंप्राप्तो विश्वामित्रस्य धीमतः ॥
नाभिवादयते ज्येष्ठं देवरातं नराधिप ।
पुत्राः पञ्चाशद् एवापि शप्ताः श्वपचतां गताः ॥ MBH. XIII. 3. 6–8.

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with the Brāhmaṇa when it attributes the performance of the sacrifice to king Hariścandra and not to Ambarīṣa as in the Rāmāyaṇa. Again the circumstances attending the cursing of the fifty sons of Viśvāmitra are the same in the Brāhmaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

Harivamśa account

The story as related in the Harivamśa differs very much from that given in the Anuśāsana Parva.[1] Thus "Among Viśvāmitra's sons Śunaḥśepa is considered as the first-born and thereby the sage who was a Bhārgava attained the position of a Kauśika. It happened that at the sacrifice arranged by Haridaśva (neither Hariścandra or Ambarīṣa) Śunaḥśepa was the victim; then he became Viśvāmitra's son because the gods who granted him life handed him over to Viśvāmitra. He was hence known as Devarāta. Devarāta and the others are the seven sons of Viśvāmitra and through Dṛṣadvatī he also had a son called Aṣṭaka.

Brahma Purāṇa version

Besides the Bhāgavata Purāṇa this legend occurs in the Brahma and the Vāyu Purāṇas. In the Gautamīya Māhātmya of the Brahma Purāṇa the Śunaḥśepa legend is described. The Ikṣvāku king Hariścandra being childless and curious to know why people longed for children sought the help of the sages Nārada and Parvata. On their advice he went to Gautamī and worshipped Varuṇa by whose grace he got a son. But the condition that Varuṇa imposed on the king was that the child should be sacrificed to him. But the king succeeded in postponing the evil day till the boy Rohita was sixteen years old. When Rohita came to know of this he said "Wait

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1 विश्वामित्रात्मजानां तु शुनश्शेपोऽग्रजः स्मृतः ।
भार्गवः कौशिकत्वं हि प्राप्तः स मुनिसत्तमः ॥
विश्वामित्रस्य पुत्रस्तु शुनश्शेपोऽभवत् किल ।
हरिदश्वस्य यज्ञे तु पशुत्वे विनियोजितः ॥
देवैर्दत्तः स वै यस्मात् देवरातस्ततोऽभवत् ।
देवरातादयस्सप्त विश्वामित्रस्य वै सुताः ।
दृषद्वतीसुतश्चापि विश्वामित्रात् तथाष्टकः ॥ Harivamśa I. 27. 54–58.

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I shall first sacrifice to Viṣṇu, Lord of worlds, with Varuṇa as Paśu; the priests shall help me in this."[1] The rest of the narrative up to Rohita's buying Śunaḥśepa is the same as the Bhāgavata Purāṇa; whereas in the Bhāgavata Hariścandra readily agrees to sacrifice Śunaḥśepa in Rohita's place, in the Brahma Purāṇa he objects to it and is ready to face death. Then a voice is heard from heaven asking the king to go to the sacred Gautamī with Rohita, Śunaḥśepa and the priests. He is asked to celebrate the sacrifice there without killing Śunaḥśepa. Accordingly Śunaḥśepa bathed in the Ganges and praised the gods and the gods declared that the sacrifice was complete without killing Śunaḥśepa.[2] Viśvāmitra adopted Śunaḥśepa as his son. The Śunaḥśepa legend is here treated in order to glorify the sacred place Gautamī.

The Vāyu Purāṇa version is in complete agreement with that given in the Harivaṁśa but here the king's name is Hariścandra and not Haridaśva.

In the Devībhāgavata also the Śunaḥśepa legend has been told and in the outline it has not deviated from the Aitareya account.

Interpretation of the legend

The Śunaḥśepa legend makes it clear that human sacrifice was prevalent in ancient India. Though Śunaḥśepa was saved through divine grace that was only a chance which happened in his case. The Sāṅkhyāyana Śrautasūtra[3] prescribes human sacrifice under the name puruṣa-medha. "An elaborate ceremony has developed in relation to it in which according to the Vājasaneyi Samhitā as many as 184 persons of different denominations and professions have to be offered as sacrifice."[4]

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1. रोहित उवाच :—
अहं पूर्वं महाराज ऋत्विग्भिः सुपुरोहितः विष्णवे लोकनाथाय यक्ष्येऽहं त्वरितं शुचिः । पशुना वरुणेनाथ तद् अनुज्ञातुमर्हसि ॥ Brahma. P. 104. 38.
2. क्रतुः पूर्णो भवत्येषः शुनश्शेपवधं विना ॥
3. प्रजापतिरश्वमेधेनेष्ट्वा पुरुषमेधमपश्यत् ।
तस्य यदनाप्तमश्वमेधेनासीत्तत्सर्वं पुरुषमेधेनाप्नोत् etc.
etc. Sāṅkh. Śrauta. 16. 10 ff.
4. Winternitz Ibid. p. 174.

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The use of a man and four other victims is stated as an offering at the piling of the great fire altar. Though the usage is not exactly laid down in any Brāhmaṇa it is quite possible that human sacrifice was prevalent.

In ancient Greece it is said that human sacrifice was not uncommon. A. P. Karmarkar writing on 'Human sacrifice in Proto-India' reveals that human sacrifice was practised in the age of the Indus valley civilization.[1] The Nāgas till recently practised head hunting which is almost human sacrifice for "the main importance in taking a head was not the glory of war but the gain of the magical forces inherent in the skull." They believed that at the erection of a men's house or 'morung' the sacrifice of a human being strengthened the new building.

The Paraśurāma Legend

Paraśurāma is considered an avatāra of Viṣṇu and his name is connected with the destruction of the Kṣatriyas.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa account

The cause for the Kṣatriya slaughter by Paraśurāma is given as follows : Kārtavīryārjuna was the head of the Haihaya Kṣatriyas. He had great yogic powers and was endowed with a thousand arms.[2] The thousand arms probably refer to his fleet of thousand ships or ship with a thousand oars. He was hospitably received one day by Jamadagni (Paraśurāma's father) and feasted sumptuously with the help of his cow Kāmadhenu. The Haihaya king longed for the cow and forcibly carried her away. Paraśurāma killed Kārtavīr-

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1. A. P. Karmarkar 'Human Sacrifice in Proto-India' ABORI. (1944) pp. 112–13.
2. हैहयानामधिपतिरर्जुनः क्षत्रियर्षभः ।
दत्तं नारायणस्यांशमाराध्य परिकर्मभिः ॥
बाहून् दशशतं लेभे दुर्धर्षत्वमरातिषु ।
अव्याहतेन्द्रियौजः श्रीतेजोवीर्ययशोबलम् ॥
योगेश्वरत्वमैश्वर्यं गुणा यत्राणिमादयः ।
चचाराव्याहतगतिर्लोकेषु पवनो यथा ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 15. 17–19.

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yārjuna and brought back the cow. The sons of the Haihaya chief killed the Ṛṣi Jamadagni in revenge, when Paraśurāma and his brothers were not present in the hermitage. Greatly enraged on hearing his father's death Paraśurāma swore vengeance not only on the Haihaya clan but on the whole Kṣatriya clan. Going to Māhiṣmatī (the seat of the Haihayas) he rid the earth of the Kṣatriyas twenty one times at regular intervals. Only Ṛkṣavān of the Pauravas, Sarvakarṇa of Ayodhyā, Bṛhadratha of Magadha, Citraratha of Aṅga and Vatsa of Kāśī are said to have escaped this slaughter. This is apparently an exaggeration. As Mr. Pusalkar writes in the 'Vedic Age'—"It appears that on the strength of the matrimonial alliance of the Bhārgavas with the ruling families of Kānyakubja and Ayodhyā (Ṛcīka married Satyavatī of Kānyakubja and Jamadagni married Reṇukā of Ayodhyā) and also of the growing discontent due to the devastating raids and the consequent unpopularity of the Haihayas, Paraśurāma organised a confederacy of various kingdoms including Vaiśāli, Videha, Kāśi, Kānyakubja and Ayodhyā which fought the Haihayas on various battlefields."

It is interesting to note here what Mr. Karandikar in the Navā Kāl (Marāthi Daily of Bombay) in the year 1932–33 says in this connection. It is given in the 'Vedic Age' p. 282 and is reproduced here :—

"According to him the Bhṛgus were great navigators and expert mariners who controlled the maritime trade between India and the western world, and occupied the coastal line on the Arabian sea. They amassed a great fortune through their trade with foreign countries. The reason for the Bhṛgu-Haihaya conflict was that Arjuna did not wish that the Bhṛgus who were agents of the foreigners, should thrive at the cost of the people. He wanted to keep the trade and commerce of the Indian people under the control of an Āryan state, for the Bhṛgus were mere self-seekers than patriots. Arjuna sought the help of the Atris, who were equally expert ship-builders and who built for him a fleet of a thousand ships. Karkotaka Nāga, Rāvaṇa and others who were defeated by Arjuna were

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seeking some opportunity to wreak vengeance on him. Arjuna's effort at getting control of the sea trade was an eyesore to the Bhṛgus and further fuel was added by Arjuna's demanding back the wealth he had bestowed on the Bhṛgus. Paraśurāma led the opposition with the aid of the parties defeated by Arjuna, killed him and destroyed the Haihaya power. The annihilation of the Kṣatriyas twentyone times is interpreted as the destruction of the population in the Narmadā region a number of times in order to wipe out the memory of the popular king Arjuna." There is not much historical evidence for this version of the story.

Reference to Paraśurāma in Vedic literature

Paraśurāma is a name unconnected with the Vedas. But his father Bhṛgu and the Bhṛgus are mentioned often in vedic literature. In the Taittirīya Samhitā the Bhṛgus are mentioned as priests.[1] Whereas Bhṛgu in the singular denotes Vāruṇi the son of Varuṇa,[2] Bhṛgus in the plural refer to the priestly class 'devoted to the fire cult'.[3]

Jamadagni figures prominently in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā, the Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā, the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa, the Aitareya

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1. अहम्। सुवर्यन्तो नापेक्षन्त आ द्यां रोहन्ति रोदसी। यज्ञं ये विश्वतोधारं सुविद्वांसो वितेनिरे। अग्ने प्रेहि प्रथमो देवयतां चक्षुर्देवानामुत मर्त्यानाम्। इयक्षमाणा भृगुभिः सजोषाः सुवर्यन्तु यजमानाः स्वस्ति। नक्तोषासा समनसा विरूपे धापयेते शिशुमेकँ समीची। द्यावा क्षामा रुक्मो अन्तर्वि भाति देवा अग्निं धारयन्द्रविणोदाः। अग्ने सहस्राक्ष॥ Taitt. Sam. 4. 6. 5. 2.

अमूं चोप दधाति मनसा मध्यमामेषां लोकानां क्लृप्त्या अथो प्राणानामिष्टो यज्ञो भृगुभिराशीर्दा वसुभिस्तस्य त इष्टस्य वीतस्य द्रविणेह भक्षीयेत्याह स्तुतशस्त्रे एवैतेन दुहे पिता मन्नरिश्वाऽच्छिद्रा पदाधा अच्छिद्रा उशिजः पदाऽनु तक्षुः सोमो विश्वविन्नेता नेषद्बृहस्पतिरुक्थामदानि शँ सिषदित्याहैतद्वा अग्नेरुक्थं तेनैवैनमनु शं सति॥ Ibid. 5. 6. 8. 6.

2. Aita. Brāh. VII. 27. 3, 4; Śat. Prāh. XI. 6. I. I.; Tait. Āran. IX. I.

3. RV. I. 58. 6. Ibid. I. 143. 4. Ibid. II. 4. 2. Ibid III. 2. 4. Ibid. IV. 7. 1.

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Brāhmaṇa, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad etc.[1]

Though the name Rāma has been mentioned in the Ṛgveda[2] it has no reference to Paraśurāma but only an ordinary individual.

In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa another Rāma is mentioned[3] and in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa a Rāma Mārgaveya is mentioned.[4] This Rāma, descendant from Mṛgu, is supposed to be Rāma descendant of Bhṛgu, by some scholars; an interchange between 'm' and 'bh' having taken place in the course of time.

In the Daśarājña fight in the Ṛgveda the Bhṛgus are said to have fought on the side of the Druhyus.[5] So also Bhṛgu's son Cyavana is stated to have fought the Pakhta prince Turyayāna, a worshipper of Indra.[6] In the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa we find the second son of Chyavana called Vidanvant supporting him (Chyavana) against Indra.[7]

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1. (a)·····जमदग्निर्ऋषिः प्रजापतिगृहीतया त्वया etc. Sāṅkh. Śrauta. II. 7. 19.
   (b)·····जमदग्नेः कर्करिकण्र्यो जमदग्निर्वै पुष्टिमपश्यत्तामात्मन्न धत्त etc. Ibid. IV. 2. 9.
   (c)·····त्र्यायुषञ्जमदग्नेः कश्यपस्यत्र्यायुषम् । यद्देवेषु त्र्यायुषन्तन्नोऽअस्तु त्र्यायुषम् ॥ Vajasa. Sam. III. 62.
   (d)·····इमावेव विश्वामित्रजमदग्नी, अयमेव विश्वामित्रः अयं जमदग्निः etc. Br. Up. II. 2. 4.
   (e)·····जमदग्निर्ऋषिः प्रजापतिगृहीतया त्वया etc. Kāṭha. Sam. 16. 19.
   (f)·····प्यश्चात्ताभिर्जमदग्निर्या उत्तरात्राभिर्विश्वामित्रो etc. Ibid. 20. 9.
2. RV. X. 93. 14.
3. तदु होवाच राम ऽऔपतस्विनिः । काममेव प्प्राण्यात्कामयमुदन्याद्यद्वै तूष्णीं जुहोति तदेवैनं प्रजापतिं करोतीति ॥ Śata. Brāh. IV. 6. 1. 7.
4. अयं अहमस्मि वो वीर इति होवाच रामो मार्गवेयो । रामो हास मार्गवेयोऽनूचानः त्र्यापर्णीयस् ॥ Aita. Brāh. VII. 27. 3, 4.
5. RV. VII. 18. 6.
6. RV. X. 61. 1–3.
7. तं तुष्टुवानं शर्यातो मानवो ग्रामेणाध्यवास्यत् तं कुमारा गोपाला अविपाला मृदा शकृत्पिण्डैर्, आसपांसुभिर्, अदिहन् । सोऽसंज्ञां शार्यात्येभ्योऽकरोत् । तन् न माता पुत्रम् अजानन् न पुत्रो मातरम् ।·····स होवाच—च्यवनो वै स भार्गवोऽभूत् etc. etc. Jaimi Brāh. III. 121.–128

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Reference in the Mahābhārata

In the Ādiparvan of the Mahābhārata there is mention of Cyavana's son Aurva, "meditating the destruction of all living beings to avenge the insult to his race by the sons of Kṛtavīrya." The Mahābhārata also mentions Cyavana as the son of Bhṛgu.[1] Thus there is the connection between Chyavana, Aurva, Ṛcīka, Jamadagni and Paraśurāma.

In the Mahābhārata Paraśurāma holds a unique place and it is said that after the killing of the Kṣatriyas he performed a sacrifice in which he bestowed the earth on Kaśyapa and then retired to Mount Mahendra. This occurs in the Vanaparva of the Mahābhārata.[2]

In the Śāntiparva it is said that Kaśyapa after receiving the earth exiled Rāma to the shores of the southern ocean. At Kaśyapa's bidding the ocean suddenly receded and a region called Sūrpāraka was created for Paraśurāma.[3]

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1. च्यवनं दीप्ततपसं धर्मात्मानं यशस्विनम्। यः स रोषाच्च्युतो गर्भान्मातुर्मोक्षाय भारत॥ आरुषी तु मनोः कन्या तस्य पत्नी मनीषिणः। और्वस्तस्यां समभवदूरुं भित्त्वा महायशाः॥ महातेजा महावीर्यो बाल एव गुणैर्युतः। ऋचीकस्तस्य पुत्रस्तु जमदग्निस्ततोऽभवत्॥ जमदग्नेस्तु चत्वार आसन्पुत्रा महात्मनः। रामस्तेषां जघन्योऽभूदजघन्यैर्गुणैर्युतः॥ MBH. I. 66. 45. ff.
भृगोर्महर्षेः पुत्रोऽभूच्च्यवनो नाम भारत॥ MBH. Vanaparva 122. 1.

2. ततो यज्ञेन महता जामदग्न्यः प्रतापवान् तर्पयामास देवेन्द्रमृत्विग्भ्यः प्रददौ महीम्॥ वेदीं चाप्याददद्धैमीं कश्यपाय महात्मने। दशव्यामायतां कृत्वा नवोत्सेधां विशांपते॥ तां कश्यपस्यानुमते ब्राह्मणाः खण्डशस्तदा। व्यभजंस्ते तदा राजन्प्रख्याताः खण्डवायनाः॥ स प्रदाय महीं तस्मै कश्यपाय महात्मने। अस्मिन्महेन्द्रे शैलेन्द्रे वसत्यमितविक्रमः॥ एवं वैरमभूत्तस्य क्षत्रियैर्लोकवासिभिः। पृथिवी चापि विजिता रामेणामिततेजसा॥ MBH. Vana. 117. 11 ff.

3. त्रिः सप्तकृत्वः पृथिवीं कृत्वा निःक्षत्रियां प्रभुः। दक्षिणामश्वमेधान्ते कश्यपायाददत्ततः॥ स क्षत्रियाणां शेषार्थं करेणोद्दिश्य कश्यपः। स्रुक्प्रग्रहवता राजंस्ततो वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्॥ गच्छ पारं समुद्रस्य दक्षिणस्य महामुने। न ते मद्विषये राम वस्तव्यमिह कर्हिचित्॥ 'पृथिवी दक्षिणा दत्ता वाजिमेधे मम त्वया। पुनरस्याः पृथिव्या हि दत्त्वा दातुमनीश्वरः।' ततः शूर्पाकरं देशं सागरस्तस्य निर्ममे। संत्रासाज्जामदग्न्यस्य सोऽपरान्तमहीतलम्॥ कश्यपस्तां महाराज प्रतिगृह्य वसुंधराम्। कृत्वा ब्राह्मणसंस्थां वै प्रविष्टः सुमहद्वनम्॥ MBH. Śānti. 48. 64 ff.

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The main outline of the Paraśurāma legend is the same in all texts. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa there is no mention of Paraśurāma's exile to the southern region. This is considered to be a later version.

Since it is a tough job to date the various portions of the Mahābhārata we have to seek elsewhere for the earliest reference to Paraśurāma.

Budhacarita reference

In Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita there is reference to Paraśurāma.[1] Aśvaghoṣa's date has been fixed as the first century A. D. as he was a contemporary of Kaniṣka.

Mention in the Rāmāyaṇa

In the Rāmāyaṇa Paraśurāma is reported to have met Rāma Dāśarathi, who spans his bow and then appears to him (Paraśurāma) in his true form of Viṣṇu. This occurs in the Bāla khāṇda which is considered an interpolation to the original Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki.

From all that has been said above it is difficult to fix the date of the Paraśurāma legend definitely. It certainly belonged to the pre-christian era as Aśvaghoṣa is familiar with him. If the conjecture of scholars that Rāma Mārgaveya in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (who fought against king Viśvantara) is the same as Rāma Bhārgava, is sound, then the legend goes back to Vedic times.

Popularity of Paras'urāma

More important than the date of the legend is the reverance which Paraśurāma commands throughout the country.

In far off Assam a sacred pool has been formed at a place where the river emerges from the mountains and is flanked on both sides by hills. It is said that Paraśurāma gave his famous axe to this pool and pilgrims throng to this sacred spot from every part of the country.[2]

1. भीष्मेन गङ्गोदरसं भवेन रामेण रामेण च भार्गवेण । श्रुत्वा कृतं कर्म पितुः प्रियार्थं पितुस्त्वं अप्यर्हसि कर्तुमिष्टम् ॥ Buddhacarita IX. 25.
2. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. IX. p. 8.

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In Udaipur there is a place called Kundian which is connected with the name of Paraśurāma. There are many temples here and a pool called Matṛkundian which is renowned as the place where Paraśurāma's sins were washed away on his bathing in the sacred waters. "A fair lasting for three days is held here in the month of May and is largely attended by pilgrims who bathe in the pool."[1]

In the Sirmur State, Punjab there are both Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas. Vaiṣṇavism is here represented by the cult of Paraśurāma and his derivative deities which centres in Rainka-jio "in the Rainka Tahsil of the State, at a great lake."[2]

Near Kangra in the Punjab there is a temple dedicated to Paraśurāma which contains a copper plate deed of grant in Sanskrit (of 612–13 A. D.) recording the gift of the village to Brāhmaṇs studying the Atharvaveda."[3]

In a village in Bijapur there is an axe-shaped rock on the river bank in commemoration of Paraśurāma. He is said to have washed his axe here after slaying the Kṣatriyas. On a rock in the river his foot prints are shown.[4]

In a village "in the Native State of Mysore there is a temple dedicated to Paraśu, the axe of Paraśurāma." The old name of this village is said to have been Bhārgavapura.[5]

At Gokarṇam, north of Mangalore, there is a pool which is said to have been dedicated by Paraśurāma to Śiva. At Cape Comorin there is another pool dedicated to Kumāra, the son of Śiva, in which it is said that Paraśurāma bathed and purged himself of all sins.

In the Kerala-māhātmya of the Bhaviṣyat Purāṇa there is a legend connected with Cape Comorin. Paraśurāma is stated to have propitiated Śiva who sent his son Kumāra to help

1. Ibid., Vol. XVI. p. 26.
2. Indian Antiquary Vol. XXXV. Article on 'Hinduism in the Himalayas' by H. A. Rose.
3. Imperial Gazeteer of India Vol. XIX. p. 124.
4. Ibid., Vol. V. p. 129.
5. Ibid., Vol. XIII. p. 148.

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Paraśurāma in getting a strip of land from Varuṇa. Both of these proceeded to Cape Comorin where, commanded by the Lord of the sea, Paraśurāma threw his axe towards the north, which fell at a place called Gokarṇam. At once the sea receded and formed a long stretch of land from Comorin to Gokarṇam for Rāma to live in. He gave the name Kerala to this place which he presented to those vedic Brāhmans he brought from the banks of the Kṛṣṇā and the Godāvarī. He established a number of temples in Kerala and disappeared in the end. In the Kailāsanātha temple at Trichur there is a sacred spot where Paraśurāma is said to have made his last appearance.

Probably when Paraśurāma was exiled from North India by Kaśyapa he went together with some men and settled down at Sūrpāraka. Probably they first stayed on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā and the Godāvarī and later on migrated to Sūrpāraka under Paraśurāma's lead. Now, as Dr. Jarl Carpenter remarks, "as Sūrpāraka must have existed as a place of some importance already at the time of Aśoka we can carry the story of Rāma's recovery of land from the ocean by means of his Sūrpa at least into the third or fourth century B. C."[1] One branch of the same people under Paraśurāma might have migrated into further South of Gokarṇam and settled down at Kerala. This accounts for the tradition in both the places. The Nambūdiris in Kerala worship him and regard him as their great protector.

Paraśurāma is worshipped by both Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas. He is considered an avatāra of Viṣṇu by the Vaiṣṇavas. To the Śaivas he is a devotee of Śiva having retired to Mount Mahendra to propitiate Śiva.

In whatever way we might interpret the story, the point is that the Haihayas after a period of ascendancy met defeat and lost their power in the conflict with the Bhṛgus.

A discussion on the name Kṛṣṇa

The name Kṛṣṇa occurs in the Vedic literature, the Epic

1. Dr. Jarl Carpenter's article on Paraśurāma in the Kuppuswāmi Śāstri Commemoration Volume.

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literature and the Purāṇic literature. In the Ṛgveda there is mention of a Kṛṣṇa whom the Anukramaṇī styles as Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa.[1] A Kṛṣṇa, father of Viśvakāya, is mentioned in Ṛgveda I. 116. 23 and I. 117. 7. The Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa alludes to Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa[2] and Kṛṣṇa Hārita is mentioned as a teacher in the Aitareya Āraṇyaka.[3] Śrī D. R. Bhandarkar, Dr. Rādhakrishnan and others see in Ṛgveda VIII. 96. 13–15 a reference to Kṛṣṇa as a non-Āryan chief waiting on the banks of the Aṁśumatī with an army of 10,000 to fight Indra. The Chāndogyopaniṣad mentions Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra as a Vedic seer and disciple of Ghora Āṅgirasa.[4] The Mahābhārata mentions Kṛṣṇa as a human hero and as a teacher and counsellor of the Pāṇḍavas in the earlier portions. But later on he is raised to the position of divinity and finally treated as the Supreme God Himself. In the Purāṇas Kṛṣṇa is the Yādava hero who was in Gokula in his early days and later migrated to Dvāraka. He is deified and identified with the Supreme Brahman. The Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas besides describing Kṛṣṇa as Devakīputra also call him Vāsudeva, son of Vasudeva.

The first question which arises is whether the Kṛṣṇa of the Ṛgveda, the Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata and the Kṛṣṇa of the Purāṇas all represent the same Kṛṣṇa or different personalities with the same name. The Mahābhārata contains no allusion to the childhood of Kṛṣṇa whereas the older Purāṇas do not refer to the connection of Kṛṣṇa with the Pāṇḍavas. Moreover the life of Kṛṣṇa at Gokula and also the way he conducted affairs during the Mahābhārata war are quite against what he preaches in the Gītā. All these points taken together argue

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1. RV. VIII. 85. 3–4.
2. Kauśī. Brāh. XXX. 9.
3. अथ हास्मा एतत्कृष्णहारितो वाग्ब्राह्मणमिवोपोदाहरति । Ait. Āraṇ. III. 2. 6,
4. तद्धैतद्घोर आङ्गिरसः कृष्णाय देवकीपुत्रायोक्त्वोवाचापिपास एव स बभूव सोऽन्तवेलायामेतत्त्रयं प्रतिपद्येताक्षितमस्यच्युतमसि प्राणसंशितमसीति तत्रैते द्वे ऋचौ भवतः ॥ Chānd. Up. III. 17. 6.

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against the identity of the Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata, the Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā and the Kṛṣṇa of the Purāṇas.

Since the Mahābhārata is concerned more with the story of the Bharatas, Kṛṣṇa's life after he came in contact with the Pāṇḍavas at Draupadī's Svayamvara is described. The early life of Kṛṣṇa, not being relevant, is not told. But the Mahābhārata is not totally devoid of reference to Kṛṣṇa's early life. The Cedi king Śiśupāla for instance calls Kṛṣṇa a Cowherd (gopa) and a cattletender (vargapāla) and refers in contempt to the killing of Pūtanā, Śakuni, Vṛṣabha etc. and to the Govardhana incident.* Another passage shows that the same Kṛṣṇa from Gokula who killed Kaṁsa, was the friend and counsellor of the Pāṇḍavas and helped them to kill Jarāsandha. Again the Harivaṁśa deals in detail with the life and history of Kṛṣṇa and so it was fit that the Mahābhārata also did not recount Kṛṣṇa's whole life.

The earlier Purāṇas do not deal with Kṛṣṇa's part in the Mahābhārata war probably because of the obvious reason that it has already found a place in the great epic.

Scholars like Winternitz doubt the identity of Kṛṣṇa, the chief of Dvāraka who helped the Pāṇḍavas in every possible way, both right and wrong, to win the Mahābhārata war, with

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* (a) जगतस्तस्थुषां श्रेष्ठः प्रभवश्चाऽप्ययश्च ह ।
भूतभव्यभवन्नाथः केशवः केशिसूदनः ॥ MBH. II. 33. 11.

(b) केशवं केशिहन्तारमप्रमेयपराक्रमम् ।
पूज्यमानं मया यो वः कृष्णं न सहते नृपः ॥ Ibid. II. 39. 2.

(c) पूतनाघातपूर्वाणि कर्माण्यस्य विशेषतः ।
त्वया कीर्तयताऽस्माकं भूयः प्रव्यथितं मनः ॥ Ibid. II. 41. 4.

(d) मनसा चिन्तयामास कृष्णं कंसनिषूदनम् ।
कृष्ण कृष्ण महाबाहो देवकीनन्दनाव्यय ॥ Ibid. III. 263. 4.

(e) आकृष्यमाणे वसने द्रौपद्या चिन्तितो हरिः
गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन्कृष्ण गोपीजनप्रिय ॥ Ibid. II. 68. 41.

(f) अट्टशूलप्रहरणे खड्गखेटधारिणि ।
गोपेन्द्रस्यानुजे ज्येष्ठे नन्दगोपकुलोद्भवे ॥ Ibid. VI. 23. 7.

(g) विमृशन्नेव कालं तं परिचिन्त्य जनार्दनः ।
मेने प्राप्तं स षट्त्रिंशं वर्षं वै केशिसूदनः ॥ Ibid. XVI- 2. 20.

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the propounder of the Bhagavad Gītā, a treasure-house of Dharma.[1] Kṛṣṇa, the hero, behaves in a human fashion and as a politician in the Mahābhārata war. The mistake is to mix up Kṛṣṇa, the hero, with the later deified Kṛṣṇa the Supreme, in the Gītā. As to the life of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula described in the Purāṇas like the Bhāgavata and the Viṣṇu, it is admitted by scholars that the imagination of later writers had much to do with the exaggerated accounts of Kṛṣṇa's relations with the gopīs. A detailed discussion of the Rāsalīla comes later on in the next chapter. All that can be said is that "Kṛṣṇa's youthful loves did not go beyond violent flirtations and a taste for group dancing and singing and they were rather a precocious manifestation of his richly artistic and vital nature." Many of the stories of Kṛṣṇa's life at Gokula were mere symbolisations. Thus there is no difficulty in identifying the Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata, the Gītā and the Purāṇas.

The next question is whether this Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas is the same as the Ṛgvedic seer Kṛṣṇa. In the epic or the Purāṇas, Kṛṣṇa is not a seer of vedic mantras and the description of Kṛṣṇa as belonging to the Āṅgirasa family in the Anukramaṇī is not supported by the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. In the epic literature Vāsudeva's teacher is named Kāśya Śandipāṇi of Avanti and his initiator is Garga. The name Kṛṣṇa is quite common in Vedic times as shown above. As Śrī Bhandarkar remarks, the attempts to connect or identify these Kṛṣṇas (Ṛgvedic, Epic and Purāṇic) or to establish the tradition of a sage Kṛṣṇa from the time of the Ṛgvedic hymns to the time of the Chāndogyopaniṣad have not proved very successful. The links which would connect the Vedic and Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇas with the Epic and Purāṇic Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa are unfortunately missing.

The question of Rādhā

We now come to the question of Rādhā. Rādhā is not mentioned by name in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Harivaṁśa

1. Winternitz H. I. L. Vol. I. p. 456.

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and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Kṛṣṇa favours a particular Gopī by sporting with her while being invisible to the others. This Gopī has perhaps come to be identified with Rādhā in later times. In the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa Rādhā is mentioned as the most fortunate and most beautiful among the Gopīs. Tāntric influence is probably responsible for the exaggerated position that Rādhā has come to occupy in later times. It is in Bengal, the stronghold of Tantra, that Rādhā holds an unique place.

The Nāradapañcarātra Saṁhitā represents the Lord in a dual personality—one a woman and the other a man i. e. Himself. The woman was Rādhā. In the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa Rādhā is made to spring from the left side of Kṛṣṇa.

The earliest reference to Rādhā is in the Gāthā-saptaśati of Hāla.[1] Here she is mentioned in connection with Kṛṣṇa.

Vākpati in his Gaudavaho mentions Rādhā in a verse describing "the marks made on Kṛṣṇa's chest by the nails and bangles of Rādhā."[2] (8th century A. D.).

Ānandavardhana in his Dhvanyāloka mentions Rādhā "and refers to the creeper grove on the Kālindī river."[3] (9th Century A. D.).

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1. मुखमारुतेन त्वं कृष्ण गोरजो राधिकाया अपनयन् ।
एतासां वल्लवीनामन्यासामपि गौरवं हरसि ॥ Gīta. Sap. I. 89.
अद्यापि बालो दामोदर इति इति जल्पिते यशोदया
कृष्णमुखप्रेषिताक्षं निभृतं हसितं व्रजवधूभिः ॥
नर्तनश्लाघननिभेन पार्श्वपरिसंस्थिता निपुणगोपी ।
सदृशगोपीनां चुम्बति कपोलप्रतिमागतं कृष्णम् ॥ Ibid. II. 12. 14.

2. णह-रेहा-राहा-कारणा ओं करुणं हरन्तु वो सरसा ।
वच्छ-त्थलम्मि कोत्थुह-किरणा अन्ती ओं कण्हस्स ॥ Gaudavaho, I. 22.
(नखरेखा राधाकरणा राधया गोप्या निर्मिताः करजप्रहाराः करुणानिमित्तं संसारदुःखं हरन्तु नाशयन्तु सरसा ३ आर्द्रा वक्षःस्थले कौस्तुभकिरणायमानाः कृष्णस्य ॥)

3. Dhvanyāloka II. 5. यथा वा—तेषां गोपवधूविलाससुहृदां राधारहः साक्षिणां क्षेमं भद्र कलिन्दशैलतनयातीरे लतावेश्मनाम् । विच्छिन्ने स्मरतल्पकल्पन-मृदुच्छेदोपयोगेऽधुना ते जाने जरठीभवन्ति विगलन्नीलत्विषः पल्लवाः ॥

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The Veṇisaṁhāra of Bhattanārāyaṇa refers to Rādhikā as the beloved of the enemy of Kaṁsa. Ānandavardhana is familiar with Bhattanārāyaṇa and hence the Veṇisamhāra must be earlier than the Dhvanyāloka.

Hemacandra's Prākrit grammar also refers to Rādhā and Hari.[1] Hemacandra lived in the 12th century A. D. That Rādhā was used as a literary figure right from the second century A. D. is borne out by these facts. But the question still remains as to when she became a deity.

Kṛṣṇa worship is quite old in India but as to when the Gopīs and Rādhā in particular came to be worshipped is problematical. A mutilated inscription from Prabhāsa (32 miles South-West of Allahabad) states 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa Gopī-rūpakartā' i. e. the maker of the images of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs. This inscription is believed to belong to the seventh or eighth century A. D. and hence as Śrī Asoka Kumar Majumdar remarks "it will be evident (from the above inscription) that the worship of Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs was prevalent at least in this area in the 7th or 8th century A. D."[2]

Inclusion of Gopas and Gopīs with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in sculptures like the one at Mahābalipuram where Kṛṣṇa is surrounded by them, shows that by this time (7th century A. D.) the Gopas and Gopīs had come to be objects of veneration in the South also.

Whether the Rāsapañcādhyāyī in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, which describes the 'dalliance of Kṛṣṇa' with the Gopīs, gave rise to the Gopī worship or was written later in order to justify the prevalent Gopī cult is difficult to decide. The Madhvas do not accept the Rāsapañcādhyāyi as a genuine part of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa saying that is was added later on to it.

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1. Hemacandra 'Kumāra Pālacarita' appendix 621. V. 2; 622. V. 5.
2. Quoted from the article on 'A note on the development of Rādhā cult' by Dr. Asoke Kumar Majumdar in ABORI.

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The Tamil classic called the Śilappadikāram (dated about the second century A. D.) mentions the god Māyavān or Kṛṣṇa, his elder brother Balarāma and his (Māyavān's) wife Nappiṇṇai. They were worshipped by the cowherds and Gopīs and "many of their boyhood games were played in the quarters of the cowherds." (Āyarpādi). One of their plays was the Kuravai dance. This Kuravai has been identified with the Hallīśaka dance mentioned in Vatsyāyana's Kāmasūtra.[1] Hemacandra identifies rāsaka with Hallīśaka and later on it became identified with the Rāsa dance. If the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was a South Indian he would have had the Kuravai dance in mind when he wrote the Rāsapañcādhyāyi. But the question as to why the name Rādhā came to be chosen is undecided.

From the time of Hāla Rādhā's name has been coupled with Kṛṣṇa and this name was probably chosen as more appropriate to North India, as Piṇṇai is a purely South Indian term which could not have appealed to the later protogonists of the Rādhā cult.

All this is mere conjecture—when and who started this cult is all shrouded in mystery. Bengal, Assam and Orissa are the strongholds of this Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult and the movement is connected with Caitanya who was the most important preacher of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship.

Certain verses in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa could also have later given rise to the combined worship of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. The tendency in Hinduism is to worship a god along with his female counterpart. This manifests itself in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in passages like "One should duly worship with devotion every day Goddess Śrī and Lord Viṣṇu, both of whom are disposed to confer boons....."[2] and "You are the Sovereigns

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1. Vātsyāyana Kāmasūtra II. X. 25. हल्लीसककीडनकैर्गायनैर्नार्त्यरासकैः ।
रागलोलार्द्रनयनैश्चन्द्रमण्डलवीक्षणैः ॥

2. श्रियं विष्णुं च वरदावाशिषां प्रभवावुभौ ।
भक्त्या सम्पूजयेन्नित्यं यदीच्छेत् सर्वसंपदः ॥ Bhā. P. VI. 19. 9.

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of the universe as well as the ultimate cause of the world. She is undoubtedly the unmanifest Prakṛti as well as the deluding potency (so) difficult to overcome. You are no other than the Supreme Person the very controller of Prakṛti. You embody all sacrificial performances while she is an embodiment of faith. While she is (worldly) activity, you are the enjoyer of its fruit. This goddess is the manifestation of the three guṇas, while you are the Time. You are the soul of all embodied beings while Goddess Śrī represents their body, the senses and the inner sense. The Almighty Goddess represents the various names and forms while you are their illuminator and ground.[1]

The combined worship of Viṣṇu and Śrī has been thus advocated by the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. When Kṛṣṇa was identified with Viṣṇu the place of Śrī had to be filled and the favourite Gopī mentioned in the text came in handy here. She was identified with Rādhā and worshipped as the wife of Kṛṣṇa by certain sects like Nimbārka and his followers. But in Bengal Rādhā is the mistress of Kṛṣṇa. Tāntric influence was probably at play in transforming this relationship from a wife to a mistress. By the time of Gīta Govinda Rādhā was an established fact and with Caitanya or a little earlier the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult was also an established fact.

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1. युवां तु विश्वस्य विभू जगतः कारणं परम् ।
इयं हि प्रकृतिः सूक्ष्मा मायाशक्तिर्दुरत्यया ॥
तस्या अधीश्वरः साक्षात् त्वमेव पुरुषः परः ।
त्वं सर्वयज्ञ इज्येयं क्रियेयं फलभुग् भवान् ।
गुणव्यक्तिरियं देवी व्यञ्जको गुणभुग् भवान् ॥
त्वं हि सर्वशरीर्यात्मा श्रीः शरीरेन्द्रियाशया ।
नामरूपे भगवती प्रत्ययस्त्वमपाश्रयः ।
यथा युवां त्रिलोकस्य वरदौ परमेष्ठिनौ ।
तथा म उत्तमश्लोक सन्तु मया महाशिषः ॥ Bhā. P. VI. 19. 11-14.

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CHAPTER IV

Special features of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The ten topics

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, as mentioned earlier, describes itself as a daśalakṣaṇa Purāṇa.[1] The ten topics dealt with here are Sarga, visarga, sthāna, Poṣaṇa, ūtI, manvantara, ĪśānukathĀ, nirodha, Mukti and Āśraya. Āśraya is the most important topic of the Purāṇa and "men of true knowledge aver that the first nine topics have been discussed in this Purāṇa only in order to present a clear conception of the last. i, e. Aśraya."[2]

Sarga, Visarga and Sthāna

The creation of the gross and subtle elements, the senses of preception and the organs of action and the mind, the ego and the Mahat-tattva due to the disturbance in the equilibrium of the three guṇas or modes of prakṛti, brought about by the will of God, has been spoken of as Sarga.[3] Sarga has been dealt with in detail in the second chapter of the thesis.

Visarga is usually understood as recreation or creation after dissolution. But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa uses Visarga to mean the next stage of creation or Visarga continues where Sarga stops. Thus Visarga is the creation of animate and inanimate beings by Brahmā.[4] The creation as proceeding from Brahmā has also been dealt with in the second chapter.

Sthāna is sthiti or the law of maintenance of order, which works according to the will of God and keeps living beings within bounds.[5] In the twelfth skanda, while enumerating the

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1. Bhā. P. II. 10. 1. Quoted earlier in Chapter I.
2. Ibid. II. 10. 2. Quoted earlier in Chapter I.
3. भूतमात्रेन्द्रियधियां जन्म सर्ग उदाहृतः ॥ Ibid. II. 10. 3.
4. ब्रह्मणोः गुणवैषम्याद् विसर्गः पौरुषः स्मृतः ॥ Bhā. P. II. 10. 3.
5. स्थितिर्वैकुण्ठविजयः । Ibid, II. 10. 4.

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ten topics the third topic is given as Vṛtti.[1] Vṛtti means profession or means that men adopt for maintaining themselves. They live within those means and an order thus prevails in society. Thus Vṛtti and Sthāna convey the same meaning. These means which men adopt are also the result of their own nature and inherent tendencies, which is also known as the law of karma.[2] The law of karma also comes under God's influence and hence it is said that Vṛtti or Sthāna is the preservation of the created beings in their own states and moral laws by Bhagavān.

Varṇāśramadharmas fall under this topic i. e. Sthāna. As is well known the initial introduction of these two dharmas (the Varṇa and the Āśrama) was to preserve some order in society by the division of labour and to divide a man's life into different stages so that he could make full use of every stage of his life. The primary motive of the Varṇas was none other than maintaining order in the society. No wonder Śrī Kṛṣṇa claims in the Gītā that the four Varṇas were introduced by him according to the nature and work of different beings,[3] The Varṇāśramadharmas are dealt with in detail in the seventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. As the account follows the Smṛtis and the Mahābhārata there is nothing new to be told here.

Another agent of God which helps to preserve law and order in society is the element of Time. Creation and dissolution of the universe, birth and death of man, the coming into being of the four yugas in succession are all governed by the element of Time which is another of God's agents. Thus a whole adhyāya of the third skandha is devoted to explaining the divisions of Time and also the duration of the lives of men as also the extent of the different yugas.[4] The subject is introduced in a deductive

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1. Bhā. P. XII. 7. 9.
2. वृत्तिर्भूतानि भूतानां चरणामचराणि च ।
   कृता स्वेन नृणां तत्र कामाच्चोदनयापि वा ॥ Bhā. P. XII. 7. 13.
3. चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
   तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ Gītā IV. 13
4. Bhā. P. III. 11.

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way as : (Just as the minutest particle of a material substance such as earth and so on leads us to postulate the existence of a Paramāṇu and the combination of material substances to that of the largest size) so can we infer the long and short measures of time which (being a potency of the Lord) is the same as the Lord, all-pervading and unmanifest and which is the circumscriber of finite objects in as much as (in the form of the sun) it travels across the large and small dimensions of things."[1] The next verse explains the smallest unit of time as paramāṇu and the longest measure of time as a couple of Parārdhas.[2] (from the creation to the dissolution of the universe). All the other various units of time fall within these two limits—the paramāṇu and a couple of parārdhas.[3]

The various avatāras of the Lord also help in maintaining law and order in society. Thus the Bhagavad Gītā tells us that when righteousness wanes and unrighteousness begins to rise then the Lord comes down in order to restore the balance.[4] When something goes amiss in the world and the order is disturbed God comes down, sets things right and the purpose of a particular avatāra ends. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes the various avatāras of Bhagavān. In the first and third skandhas itself the different avatāras are introduced,[5] and each avatāra is treated separately in the course of the book. In what form and why a particular avatāra came down to earth is described in detail. Thus referring to the Nṛsiṁhāvatāra the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says : "In His fourteenth manifestation He took the form of a man-lion and tore with His claws the bosom of the most

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1. एवं कालोऽप्यनुमितः सौक्ष्म्ये स्थौल्ये च सत्तम ।
संस्थानभुक्त्या भगवानव्यक्तो व्यक्तभुग् विभुः ॥ Bhā. P. III. 11. 3.
2. The word 'paramāṇu' though primarily denoting the minutest particle of matter also signifies the smallest unit of time.
स कालः परमाणुर्वै यो भुङ्क्ते परमाणुताम् ।
सतोऽविशेषभुग् यस्तु स कालः परमो महान् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 11. 4.
3. Ibid. III. 11. 5–38.
4. यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ Gītā. IV. 7.
5. Mentioned earlier in Chapter II.

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powerful demon king (Hiraṇyakaśipu)."[1] The purpose of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa who was himself an avatāra of Viṣṇu. Thus the Purāṇa says : "In the nineteenth and twentieth avatāras the Lord was born among the Vṛṣṇis as Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa and relieved the earth of its burden."[2]

The different avatāras have been mentioned in the second chapter and the theory of avatāras has been discussed later in chapter V of this work.

Poṣaṇa, Ūtis and Manvantaras

The Lord's Grace on His devotees is called Poṣaṇa. In the twelfth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Rakṣa is described as the fourth topic. Poṣaṇa and Rakṣa are synonymous and express the desire on the part of God to protect his devotees.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa abounds in accounts of the devotees of the Lord who were protected by His Grace or who were preserved from destruction by Him. The story of Prahlāda is an unique example of such a devotee. His father was bent on killing him for his pro-Viṣṇu utterances. Prahlāda was struck by pointed spears,[3] trampled upon by elephants, bit by serpents, was given poison, was starved, exposed to frost, winds, fire and floods and was even crushed under rocks—but every time he was saved by the Grace of God."[4]

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1. चतुर्दशं नारसिंहं विभ्रद्दैत्येन्द्रमूर्जितम् ।
ददार करजैर्वक्षस्येरकां कटकृद्यथा ॥ Bhā. P. I. 3. 18.

2. एकोनविंशे विंशतमे वृष्णिषु प्राप्य जन्मनी ।
रामकृष्णाविति भुवो भगवानहरद्भरम् ॥ Ibid. I. 3. 23.

3. नैर्ऋतास्ते समादिष्टा भर्त्रा वै शूलपाणयः ।
तिग्मदंष्ट्रकराला स्यास्ताम्रश्मश्रुशिरोरुहाः ॥
नदन्तो भैरवान् नादांश्छिन्धि भिन्दीति वादिनः ।
आसीनं चाहनञ्छूलैः प्रह्लादं सर्वमर्मसु ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 5. 39-40.

4. दिग्गजैर्दन्दशूकैश्च अभिचारावपातनैः ।
मायाभिः संनिरोधैश्च गरदानैरभोजनैः ॥
हिमवाय्वग्निसलिलैः पर्वताक्रमणैरपि ।
न शशाक यदा हन्तुमपापमसुरः सुतम् ॥
चिन्तां दीर्घतमां प्राप्तस्तत् कर्तुं नाभ्यपद्यत ।
एष मे ब्रह्मसाधूक्तो वधोपायाश्च निर्मिताः ।
तैस्तैर्द्रोहैरसद्धर्मैर्मुक्तः स्वेनैव तेजसा ॥ Ibid. VII. 5. 43-45.

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The Grace of God is not restricted to human beings alone. The devotee can be a human being or an animal–the only requisite here is devotion to God and the gene or the species is no consideration. Thus when Gajendra, (the king of elephants) who was caught by an alligator while sporting in the water, extolled Hari, the Lord arrived swiftly at the place of distress and saved the elephant from the jaws of the alligator.[1]

The Ūtis are 'the latent desires of the various creatures which lead to their bondage through interested action.' [2]

The latent desires of creatures lead them to various kinds of action which in turn bind them to the cycle of birth and death. The latent desires are the result of past karmas and this chain of 'ūtis' goes on till devotion wells up in the heart of a man and he realizes the truth relating to God. When realization dawns "the knot of ignorance in his heart is broken asunder, all his doubts are dispersed and the entire stock of his karmas get liquidated." [3]

The stories of the different Manus (presiding over the different manvantaras) comprise the next topic termed manvantara in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. An account of the different Manus has been given in the second chapter of the thesis.

Īśānukathā, Nirodha and Mukti

The life accounts of the various manifestations of Śrī Hari as well as His saintly devotees come under the term Īśānu-

1. तं तद्वदार्तमुपलभ्य जगन्निवासः स्तोत्रं निशम्य दिविजैः सह संस्तुवद्भिः । छन्दोमयेन गरुडेन समुह्यमानश्चक्रायुधोऽभ्यगमदाशु यतो गजेन्द्रः ॥ सोऽन्तः सरस्युरुबलेन गृहीत आर्तो दृष्ट्वा गरुत्मति हरिं ख उपात्तचक्रम् । उत्क्षिप्य साम्बुजकरं गिरमाह कृच्छ्रान्नारायणाखिलगुरो भगवन् नमस्ते ॥ तं वीक्ष्य पीडितमजः सहसावतीर्य सग्राहमाशु सरसः कृपयोज्जहार । ग्राहाद् विपाटितमुखादरिणा गजेन्द्रं सम्पश्यतां हरिरमूमुचदुस्रियाणाम् ॥ Bhā. P. VIII. 3. 31–33.

2. The meaning of 'ūti' is given as : (a) preserving, protecting (b) sewing, weaving (c) distilling (d) speed (e) sport, play in both Monier William's and Wilson's Sanskrit to English dictionaries.

3. भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि दृष्ट एवात्मनीश्वरे ॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 21.

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katha.[1] It will be seen that Īśānukathā and Poṣaṇa are supplementary to each other. Poṣaṇa is described as the Grace of the Lord on His devotees. Thus it forms part of the stories connected with the Lord. The whole Bhāgavata Purāṇa can be described as discussing the topic Īśānukathā as whatever is said there has connection with the Lord in one way or another.

Nirodha is the "withdrawal of the individual soul with all its qualifications or adjuncts into the Lord subsequent to His retirement (falling into yoganidrā)." In other words Nirodha is the sleep of Hari and of all the individual souls in Pralaya. And when the Jīva relinquishes its assumed character and realizes its true nature they call it mukti or emancipation of the soul.[2] Mukti, in short, only means the emancipation of the soul. There are five different kinds of mukti described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. They are sālokya, sārṣṭi, sāmīpya, sārūpya and Sāyujya or ekatva which means oneness or absorption into the Deity.[3]

The description of the nature of salvation is one of the subjects of all sacred texts and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is not the first to describe mukti as sālokya and sāyujya. The Kauśītaki Upaniṣad mentions that mukti consists in sāyujya[4] and the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad says that emancipation is sāyujya and salokata with the Deity.[5] The word sāyujya goes back to the Ṛgveda where it is used as Sāyujya in connection with two friendly birds.[6] The birds here denoted are the individual soul and God or two individual souls, one in bondage and the other free. Sāyujya denotes the idea of oneness and is used in the sense of inseparable friendship. If there can be

1. अवतारानुचरितं हरेश्चास्यानुवर्तिनाम् ।
सतामीशकथाः प्रोक्ता नानाख्यानोपबृंहिताः ॥ Bhā. P. II. 10. 5.
2. निरोधोऽस्यानुशयनमात्मनः सह शक्तिभिः ।
मुक्तिर्हित्वान्यथारूपं स्वरूपेण व्यवस्थितिः ॥ Ibid. II. 10. 6.
3. Mentioned earlier in Chapter II.
4. सायुज्यं संस्थानम् । Kauś, Up. I. 3.
5. एतस्यै देवतायै सायुज्यं सलोकतां जयति । Bṛ. Up. I. 5. 23.
6. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते । RV. I. 164. 20.

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Sāyujya between two friends the same relation can exist between a devotee and the Deity. Thus gradually sāyujya came to mean oneness or Ekatva between the individual and supreme souls and it is in this sense that it is used in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Of all the five types of mukti Sāyujya is the most important as a soul that attains sāyujya obviously attains sālokya, sāmīpya and sarūpata as well. Thus Veṅkaṭanātha holds that Sāyujya alone is salvation proper while the others are only subsidiary. [1]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is one of the important texts of the Bhāgavata school (Pāñcarātra cult) and the philosophy it embodies is mainly that of this school though traces of Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and other schools can be found in it. The other sacred texts of the Bhāgavata school are the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, the Gītā and the Anugītā portions, the early Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. A study of the conception of mukti or mokṣa in the Bhāgavata literature will reveal the importance laid on Ekatva or Sāyujya here. Mokṣa here means the cessation of all worldly existence and a sense of identification with the Supreme Being. It is also described as the return of Brahman into His own true nature. [2] The way through which the emancipated ṣouls pass is given in these terms—"The path that is theirs—that are stainless—is fraught with auspiciousness and felicity. Sūrya (sun) who is the dispeller of the darkness of all the worlds is said to be the door (through which the emancipate pass). Entering Sūrya, the bodies of such persons become consumed by his fire. They then become invisible for after that they cannot be seen by anybody at any time. Reduced into invisible atoms they then enter into Nārāyaṇa (who resides in the centre of Sūrya). Passing out from him also, they enter into the form of Aniruddha. Losing all physical attributes altogether and transformed into Mind alone

1. सालोक्यादिप्रभेदा ननु परिचिताः क्वापि मोक्षस्य मैवम् । सायुज्यस्यैव तत्त्वात् तदितरविषये मुक्तिशब्दस्तु भक्तिः । Tattvamukti Kalāpa. II. 67.

2. Quoted from Bharatan Kumarappa's "The Hindu Conception of the Deity". p. 117.

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they then enter into Pradyumna. Passing out of Pradyumna those foremost of regenerate persons then enter into Saṁkarṣaṇa who is otherwise called Jīva. After this, divested of the three primal attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas, those foremost of regenerate beings quickly enter the Supreme Soul otherwise called Kṣetrajña and which itself transcends the three primal attributes. Know that Vāsudeva is He called Kṣetrajña. Verily shouldst thou know that Vāsudeva is the abode or original refuge of all things in the universe." [1]

This suggests the ultimate union of the emancipated soul with the Supreme One. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa abounds in verses which proclaim the return of the individual soul to the Absolute and its merging into the Absolute. Thus III. 27. 6–11 [2] says—"Practising concentration of mind through yama and other forms of yoga with reverence, he who has realized the self by means of sincere devotion to Me and by listening to My stories, by evenmindedness towards all beings and absence of enmity or attachment to any, by practising continence and observing a vow of silence and by devotion to one's own deity in a spirit of dedication to God : who remains contented with whatever is got by chance and takes food in a measured quantity, is ever given to contemplation, lives in seclusion and is calm and composed, friendly, compassionate

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1. MBH. Nārāyaṇīya, 345. 13–18. Quoted from Bharatan Kumarappa, Ibid. pp. 117–118.

2. यमादिभिर्योगपथैरभ्यसन् श्रद्धयान्वितः ।
मयि भावेन सत्येन मत्कथाश्रवणेन च ॥
सर्वभूतसमत्वेन निर्वैरेणाप्रसङ्गतः ।
ब्रह्मचर्येण मौनेन स्वधर्मेण बलीयसा ॥
यदृच्छयोपलब्धेन संतुष्टो मितभुङ् मुनिः ।
विविक्तशरणः शान्तो मैत्रः करुण आत्मवान् ॥
सानुबन्धे च देहेऽस्मिन्नकुर्वन्नसदाग्रहम् ।
ज्ञानेन दृष्टतत्त्वेन प्रकृतेः पुरुषस्य च ॥
निवृत्तबुद्ध्यवस्थानो दूरीभूतान्यदर्शनः ।
उपलभ्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं चक्षुषेवार्कमात्मदृक् ॥
मुक्तलिङ्गं सदाभासमसति प्रतिपद्यते ।
सतो बन्धुमसच्चक्षुः सर्वानुस्यूतमद्वयम् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 27. 6–11.

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and self-possessed; nay, by virtue of wisdom acquired through the preception of reality of both Matter and Spirit, he who ceases to identify himself with his body and to regard those connected with it as his own, who transcends the three states of consciousness and, therefore, no longer sees anything else than God—such a man is able to perceive his true self with his purified intellect, even as one sees the sun with his eyes, and attains to that Brahma who is One without a second, who is free from all adjuncts, who shines as the only reality through the false ego, who is the foundation of Prakṛti nay, who reveals the Mahat-tattva and other evolutes and interpenetrates everything—both cause and effect." This also reveals what, according to the Bhāgavata, should be the code of conduct of a person.

According to Dr. Schroder this advaitic identification of the individual and Supreme souls in the Pāñcarātra or Bhāgavata literature is due to outside influence. The general trend in this literature is certainly non-advaitic. But that does not preclude the sprinkling of a few advaitic passages here and there. The different systems of philosophy in India are so interconnected and what is more important, are more or less contemporaneous that the existence of such advaitic passages need not generally be a borrowing from those sources. There is another reason for Dr. Schroder's argument for as he says—"all Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās recognize the existence of Nityas or ever-free beings and cannot, therefore, admit that a previously bound soul should become more inseparably united with the Lord than these are." In Vaikuṇṭha or the Highest heaven there are two classes of souls (Jīvas) residing called the Nityas and the Muktas. The Muktas are the liberated souls and the Nityas are the companions of God like Ananta, Brahmā, Garuḍa and Viṣvaksena. The Nityas are eternally free and are unbound.

The Nārāyaṇīya has a solution to this riddle. It says that the Nityas are created by the Supreme in order to perform certain specific functions. Thus Brahmā has been assigned the function of creation. [1] Hence these Nityas continue in

1. MBH. Nārāyaṇīya 341. 54–76. Quoted from Bharatan Kumarappa, Ibid. p. 120.

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that state in order to fulfil their respective work. But in the case of the released or liberated souls "the highest end of cessation of conscious existence" is achieved. Annihilation of conscious existence is the keynote of souls striving for liberation. [1]

The conception of a heaven inhabited by souls which are eternally free might probably indicate an earlier view. The identification of the emancipated soul with the Supreme probably reflects a later attitude towards Mukti which was influenced by the Advaitic tendency of the age. Thus in Padma Tantra I. 4. 14–15 [2] Brahman asks "What is the difference, O Highest spirit, between Thee and the liberated soul ?" The answer is—"They (the liberated) become I. There is no difference whatsover." This is plain Advaita according to Dr. Schroder. But the answer goes on "As I live (viharāmi) just so live the liberated souls." Dr. Schroder explains this to mean—"They become like Me, except of course with regard to the governance of the world." But it can also mean that the souls live only in Him and have no independent existence. What the Pāñcarātra faith aims at is probably a oneness with the Deity but not a losing of individuality in the process. The emancipated soul preserves a distinctness even in liberation but it is not a separate existence. Thus as Viṣṇutilaka II. 100 [3] says—"Just as gold in the midst of fire shines separately as though it were not in contact (with the fire) even so he who is clinging to Brahman (Brahmaṇi lagna) is seen to exist in the form of a gem (maṇi)." He who has become attached to the jewel of gems (maṇiratna) is said to have attained identity (with the Lord)." [4]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes the release of souls as ".....the Jiva becomes one with Brahma and gets established

1. MBH. Ibid. 341. 11 and 12. Bharatan Kumarappa, Ibid. p. 120.
2. Quoted from Schroder's Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā' p. 91.
3. Quoted from Shroder Ibid. p. 92.
4. Viṣṇutilaka II. 54. Quoted from Schroder, Ibid. p. 52.

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in the glory of the self." [1] "Having thus irrecovably fixed his mind on the Supreme spirit and become one with the Infinite, that great hero cast off his body at the (proper) time." [2] Though these indicate an identification with the Supreme Being, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not lack in passages which suggest a distinction between the individual and Supreme souls. Bhāgavata Purāṇa IX. 4. 63-66 [3] runs thus—"My heart being completely possessed by My pious devotees, I am really subject to the control of such devotees like one who is not self-dependent. And I am the (only) beloved of My devotees. As apart from My pious devotees to whom I am the highest goal, I covet neither Myself nor goddess Śrī who is eternal (like Myself), O holy sage. How dare I forsake them, who having renounced (all attachments for) their wife, house, children and relations, (nay), their (very) life and wealth and (their welfare in) this and the other world, have sought Me as their protector ? Pious souls who have fastened their heart on Me and look upon all with the same eye enthral Me by (their) devotion (even) as virtuous ladies enthral their virtuous husbands. Pious souls (devotees) are My heart, while I am the (very) heart of the righteous. They do not cognize anything else (dearer) than Me nor do I know in the least anyone else

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1. यद्येषोपरता देवी माया वैशारदी मतिः ।
सम्पन्न एवेति विदुर्महिम्नि स्वे महीयते ॥ Bhā. P. I. 3. 34.
2. एवं स वीरप्रवरः संयोज्यात्मानमात्मनि ।
ब्रह्मभूतो दृढं काले तत्याज स्वं कलेवरम् ॥ Ibid. IV. 23. 13.
3. अहं भक्तपराधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।
साधुभिर्ग्रस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥
नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैः साधुभिर्विना ।
श्रियं चात्यन्तिकीं ब्रह्मन् येषां गतिरहं परा ॥
ये दारागारपुत्राप्तान् प्राणान् वित्तमिमं परम् ।
हित्वा मां शरणं याताः कथं तांस्त्यक्तुमुत्सहे ॥
मयि निर्बद्धहृदयाः साधवः समदर्शनाः ।
वशीकुर्वन्ति मां भक्त्या सत्स्त्रियः सत्पतिं यथा ॥
साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ।
मदन्यत् ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4.63-66 & 68.

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(dearer) than them." In this passage the Supreme Being makes a distinction between the two souls and such thoughts are not infrequent in the Bhāgavata and Viṣṇu Purāṇas.

The idea of salvation is connected with the conception of heaven or the kingdom of God. Whether the individual soul merges into the Supreme Soul in mukti as in the advaita philosophy or preserves its distinctness as in the Bhāgavata faith, the idea of heaven is not incompatible with the notion of salvation. But the importance of heaven is more for those who believe in the duality of the devotee and God than for the advaitins. Thus Śaṅkara speaks of special abodes of God [1] "and points that God, as a person, sits on a throne [2] in the city of Aparājita in Brahmaloka." [3] But he adds that all these things (the world, the city, the throne etc.) are made of Māyā and therefore not real in the ultimate resort. "Śaṅkara, therefore, holds that the worship of a personal God can produce no better result than what would follow from the attainment of paradise or svarga." [4]

In devotional philosophy the kingdom of God has various names. Being the greatest and highest place according to the imagination of the mind it is variously called as 'Paramapada', 'Divyasthāna', 'Parasthāna' and 'Paramasthāna.' The Ṛgveda says that "there is a flow of sweetness in Viṣṇu's Paramapada, [5] which is seen by His devotees. [6] The Kaṭhopaniṣad mentions that a devotee reaches the supreme place of Viṣṇu. [7] The Brahma Tantra addresses God as "O Lord, the sages know Thy Paramapada as a primal cause of all effects, the best object of speech and the Supreme perfection

1. अधिकारिको यः सवितृमण्डलादिषु विशेषायतनेष्ववस्थितः पर ईश्वरः। Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on BS. IV. 4. 18.
2. पर्यङ्कस्थं ब्रह्म। Ibid. on BS. III. 3. 27.
3. ब्रह्मलोके तृतीयस्यामितो दिवि अपराजिता पूः। Ibid. on BS. IV. 4. 22.
4. सगुणविद्याविषाकावस्थानं त्वेतत् स्वर्गादिवदवस्थान्तरं यत्रैतदैश्वर्यमुपवर्ण्यते॥ Ibid.
5. RV. I. 154. 5.
6. RV. I. 12. 20.
7. ..... सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद् विष्णोः परमं पदम्॥ Kaṭha. Up. I. 3. 9.

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of the yogis." [1] The Mahābhārata describes the divine abode as primal, non-aging, unknowable, difficult to understand and attainable with the help of the Āgamas. [2] It is above the abode of Brahmā, full of lustre and auspicious. Even the gods cannot see it. "The place of Viṣṇu the Supreme is more effulgent even than the sun and fire. It is firm, non-decaying and non-decreasing." [3] According to the Gītā a yogī "attains the primal, supreme place where there is no disease and which is eternal. [4]" And the Viṣṇu Purāṇa proclaims—"Those who are exclusively devoted to God or always meditate upon Brahma or practise yoga attain that supreme place which the sages visualize." [5]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa calls the kingdom of God Vaikuṇṭha, a realm which is adored by all. [6] Vaikuṇṭha is the resplendent abode of Viṣṇu which is beyond the quality of ignorance (tamas) and devotees who reach there once never come back.[7]

1. कार्याणां कारणं पूर्वं वचसां वाच्यमुत्तमम् ।
योगिनां परमां सिद्धिं परमं ते पदं विदुः ॥ Brahmatantra, Jitante stotram.
2. दिव्यं स्थानमजरं चाप्रमेयं दुर्विज्ञेयं चागमैर्गम्यमाद्यम् । Quoted from Kal. Kalpa. Vol. 21. p. 123. Year 1956.
3. ब्रह्मणः सदनादूर्ध्वं परं स्थानं प्रचक्षते । अत्यर्कानलदीप्तं तत् स्थानं विष्णोर्महात्मनः । स्थानमेतन्महाभाग ध्रुवमक्षयमव्ययम् ॥ Quoted from Ibid. p. 123.
4. (a) कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धनविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ Gita, II. 51.
(b) वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥
Ibid. VIII. 28.
(c) सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ Ibid. XVIII. 56.
5. एकान्तिनः सदा ब्रह्मध्यायिनो योगिनो हि ये ।
तेषां तत् परमं स्थानं यद्वै पश्यन्ति सूरयः ॥
Viṣ. P. Quoted from Kal. Kalpa. Vol. 21. p. 123. Year 1956,
6. त एकदा भगवतो वैकुण्ठस्यामलात्मनः ।
ययुर्वैकुण्ठनिलयं सर्वलोकनमस्कृतम् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 15. 13.
7. अजानन्तः प्रतिविधिं तूष्णीमासन् सुरेश्वराः ।
ततो वैकुण्ठमगमद् भास्वरं तमसः परम् ॥
यत्र नारायणः साक्षान्न्यासिनां परमा गतिः ।
शान्तानां न्यस्तदण्डानां यतो नावर्तते गतः ॥ Ibid. X. 88. 25–26.

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In this Vaikuṇṭha resides Lord Viṣṇu along with His divine spouse Śrī. [1] At times Viṣṇu Himself is called Lord Vaikuṇṭha conveying the idea that both share the quality of eternity, truth, knowledge, light and infinitude. Thus in the third skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is said that "All the people living there are endowed with a form similar to that of Lord Vaikuṇṭha etc." [2] In the second skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa there is a vivid description of Vaikuṇṭha. Thus it says that the Lord was pleased with Brahmā and revealed to him His own supreme abode "higher than which there is no other realm, which is absolutely free from afflictions, bewilderment and fear and which is extolled on all sides by highly enlightened souls who have been blessed with His sight. etc. etc." [3]

Āśraya (S'araṇāgati) (Prapatti)

Āśraya or dependence on the Almighty is described as the tenth topic discussed in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. It is also said that all the other nine topics are discussed in order to emphasize the importance of Āśraya. Āśraya means a place of refuge, a support, or a master. Here Āśraya is described as "that from which are known to proceed the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe; which is spoken of as the supreme Brahman or the Supreme spirit (in the scriptures)." [4] In other words Āśraya is Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself. Nothing can proceed without the will of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. Sarga, pratisarga, sthāna, poṣaṇa, ūti, manvantara, Īśānukathā, nirodha and mukti all have for their master the Almighty Viṣṇu. Their enumeration serves only to illustrate the importance of the controller behind all this cosmos i.e. Bhagavān Viṣṇu. That is why the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says that the first

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1. ..... वैकुण्ठाख्यं यदध्यास्ते श्रीनिवासः श्रिया सह ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4. 60.
2. वसन्ति यत्र पुरुषाः सर्वे वैकुण्ठमूर्तयः ।
   येऽनिमित्तनिमित्तेन धर्मेणाराधयन् हरिम् ॥ Ibid. III. 15. 14.
3. Ibid. II. 9. 9–13.
4. आभासश्च निरोधश्च यतश्चाध्यवसीयते ।
   स आश्रयः परं ब्रह्म परमात्मेति शब्द्यते ॥ Ibid. II. 10. 7.

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nine topics have been discussed in order to present a clear conception of the tenth i.e. Āśraya. [1]

Āśraya or dependence on Bhagavān is the key to God realization. Complete dependence results in one's giving up all notion of Ego and surrendering to the Will of God. The attempt of all philosophical and religious teaching is to impress on the devotee the need to give up all notion of 'I'. And self-surrender (or śaraṇāgati) is the surest and easiest way to get rid of egoism. Once the devotee surrenders himself up to God his work is over. The Lord takes care of him thereafter. What is necessary here is only complete faith in Bhagavān. The only conditions that are required are stated in the Ahirbudhnya Samhitā as "Making up one's mind for the good, renouncing obstructions, faith that He will save, choice of the goal, self-surrender and utter helplessness or dependence." [2] Once firm faith is established there is nothing to check the progress of the devotee. It comes of its own accord through the Grace of God. A wise gardener sows his seeds and has faith in their growth. He does not dig up every day to observe the progress of the growth. If he does that he will be only retarding its growth. Similarly if the devotee believes in the Deity and surrenders himself completely to Him, he will be blessed ere long.

Being the bhāṣya of the Bhagavad Gītā the Bhāgavata Purāṇa elaborates the doctrine of self-surrender expressed in the Gītā as "Giving up all dharmas surrender to Me alone. I shall release you from all sin." [3] The Bhāgavata illustrates the doctrine of śaraṇāgati or self-surrender through the lives of bhaktas like Ambarīṣa, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Parīkṣit.

Ambarīṣa was a monarch who had inherited a large kingdom from his father. But he regarded all that "as equal in value to objects seen in a dream." [4] He was completely

1. Bhā. P. II. 10. 2. Quoted earlier.
2. Ahirbudh. Sam. 37. 18 ff.
3. सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥ Gītā. XVIII. 66.
4. मेनेऽतिदुर्लभं पुंसां सर्वं तत् स्वप्नसंस्तुतम्।
विद्वान् विभवनिर्वाणं तमो विशति यत् पुमान्॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4. 16.

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devoted to Lord Vāsudeva and had no other thought in his mind. "He fixed his mind exclusively on the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, he employed his words in recounting the virtues of Lord Vaikuṇṭha, his hands in sweeping the temple of Śrī Hari and so on and his auditory sense in hearing the excellent stories of the immortal Lord." [1] Pleased with his devotion and love Śrī Hari delivered to him His own discus, (sudarśana) the terror of His adversaries and the protector of His servants.[2] This devoted soul who had surrendered himself to Vāsudeva was once caught in the horns of a dilemma.

The circumstances are related as follows in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Ambarīsa had observed the Ekādaśī fast and was about to break it on the next day i.e. on the Dvādaśī day. At that moment there appeared before him an unexpected quest in the person of the sage Durvāsas. [3] Putting off his meal king Ambarīṣa honoured the guest and asked him to have his meal at the royal household. The sage accepted the invitation and went to finish his routine bath before having his food. Only half a muhūrta was left of the Dvādaśī day and the fast had to be broken before the half muhūrta expired. Having consulted the brāhmins as to the best course of action Ambarīṣa decided to break his fast by having some water as it is said that "to take water is as good as taking food and at the same time it is no eating." [4] But when Durvāsas returned he knew by intuition the king's act and at once shook with rage. Rebuking the king for his action Durvāsas pulled a matted lock from his head and created by means of it an evil spirit (Kṛtyā) in order to get rid of Ambarīṣa.

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1. स वै मनः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोर्वचांसि वैकुण्ठगुणानुवर्णने ।
करौ हरेर्मन्दिरमार्जनादिषु श्रुतिं चकाराच्युतसत्कथोदये ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4.18.
2. तस्मा अदाद्धरिश्चक्रं पत्यनीकभयावहम् ।
एकान्तभक्तिभावेन प्रीतो भृत्याभिरक्षणम् ॥ Ibid. IX. 4. 28.
3. व्रतान्ते कार्तिके मासि त्रिरात्रं समुपोषितः ।
स्नातः कदाचित् कालिन्द्यां हरिं मधुवनेऽर्चयत् ॥
लब्धकामैरनुज्ञातः पारणायोपचक्रमे ।
तस्य तर्ह्यतिथिः साक्षाद् दुर्वासा भगवानभूत् ॥ Ibid. IX. 4. 30 & 35.
4. अपोऽश्नाति तन्नैवाशितं नैवानशितम् ॥

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The king saw the evil spirit clearly above his head but did not even move an inch. He implicitly trusted in Lord Vāsudeva and at once the Sudarśana burnt the aforesaid evil spirit. The discus of Lord Viṣṇu did not stop there. God cannot tolerate his devotees being insulted. After burning the evil spirit the discus rushed at Durvāsas and the sage started running to save his own life. "Durvāsas betook himself to the quarters, the sky, the terrestrial world, the subterranean regions, the oceans, the different spheres as well as their guardians and heaven too." [1] But Sudarśana was following him closely. Durvāsas next approached Brahmā and Śiva but they could do nothing to stop the pursuit of Sudarśana. Śiva advised Durvāsas to approach Lord Hari Himself and the sage hurried to Vaikuṇṭha. There he fell at Viṣṇu's feet and sought His protection. Viṣṇu also did not save Durvāsas but asked the sage to go back to king Ambarīṣa and ask his forgiveness. In a short speech Vāsudeva expounds the power that such devotees like Ambarīṣa possess. Having surrendered themselves up to Him these bhaktas become such favourites of Lord Viṣṇu that He in His turn becomes so much attached to them that their welfare becomes His paramount interest. Viṣṇu thus says: "My heart having been (completely) taken possession of by My pious devotees, I am really subject to the control of such devotees like one who is not self dependent, O Brahman. And I am the (only) beloved of My pious devotees." [2] Addressing Durvāsas thus Viṣṇu tells him "Therefore O Brahman, approach king Ambarīṣa and seek the forgiveness of that highly blessed soul." [3] It is not that Lord Viṣṇu could not stop His own Sudarśana. The point to be noted here is that Vāsudeva did not want to do anything that a devotee like Ambarīṣa did not desire.

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1. दिशो नभः क्ष्मां विवरान् समुद्राँल्लोकान् सपालांस्त्रिदिवं गतः सः।
यतो यतो धावति तत्र तत्र सुदर्शनं दुष्प्रसहं ददर्श॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4. 51.
2. Ibid. IX. 4. 63-68 Verses 63-66, have been quoted earlier in this chapter.
3. ब्रह्मँस्तद् गच्छ भद्रं ते नाभागतनयं नृपम्।
क्षमापय महाभागं ततः शान्तिर्भविष्यति॥ Ibid. IX. 4. 71.

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His attachment to such selfless bhaktas makes Him powerless in a certain sense. He leaves all action to Ambarīṣa. The question whether to save the sage or not was to be decided by His devotee Ambarīṣa alone and so Viṣṇu sends Durvāsas back to the king. Humility is the first quality of any bhakta and in the case of those who have surrendered themselves to Lord Vāsudeva there is not even a trace of ego left in them that they are humility personified. Thus when Durvāsas went back and fell at Ambarīṣa's feet for forgiveness the king was overcome with grief and compassion instead of being proud at his own power. [1] He extolled the discus (sudarśana) of Viṣṇu and at his request the sage was saved from its scorching effect. [2]

Prahlāda, the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, was another such devotee of Śrī Hari. His father himself was his enemy and persecuted him for uttering the divine name of Vāsudeva. But Prahlāda put his whole faith in the Lord and remained firm in his devotion to Vāsudeva. Prahlāda was a devotee of the highest order and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says that "it is futile to recount his excellences which are innumerable." [3] Every time Hiraṇyakaśipu tried to put an end to his son Śrī Hari saved him, while Prahlāda sat still, his mind occupied with thoughts of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. [4]

The purpose of the Narasiṁhāvatāra itself was to save His devotee Prahlāda from further harm at the hands of Hiraṇyakaśipu. On account of the boons conferred on Hiraṇya-

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1. तस्य सोद्यमनं वीक्ष्य पादस्पर्शविलज्जितः ।
अस्तावीत् तद्धरेरस्त्रं कृपया पीडितो भृशम् ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 5. 2.
2. यदि नो भगवान् प्रीत एकः सर्वगुणाश्रयः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभावेन द्विजो भवतु विज्वरः ॥
इति संस्तुवतो राज्ञो विष्णुचक्रं सुदर्शनम् ।
अशाम्यत् सर्वतो विप्रं प्रदहद् राजयाज्ञया ॥ Ibid. IX. 5. 11–12.
3. गुणैरलमसंख्येयैर्माहात्म्यं तस्य सूच्यते etc. Ibid. VII. 4. 36.
4. नन्दन्तो भैरवान् etc. quoted earlier in this chapter.
परे ब्रह्मण्यनिर्देश्ये भगवत्यखिलात्मनि ।
युक्तात्मन्यफला आसन्नपुण्यस्येव सत्क्रियाः ॥ Ibid. VII. 5. 40–41.

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kaśipu by Brahmā the demon could not be killed by any created living being. He could not die either indoors, or outdoors by day or night and through weapons. Moreover his death could not take place on earth or in air and neither from men nor from animals. Gods, demons and serpents also could not cause his death and he had no adversary in battle. [1] Lord Vāsudeva overcame all these obstacles and assumed the form of a man-lion in order to protect His bhakta Prahlāda.

Uddhava, another devout bhakta, started worshipping the Lord at the early age of five and it is said that, engaged in such worship, he felt no inclination even to take his food inspite of his mother's call. [2]

King Parīkṣit is described as a great devotee of the Lord. [3] Having given his mind and heart to the Lord he did not feel embarassed even when faced with terrible fear of meeting his death at the hands of the serpent Takṣaka. [4] He shook off all attachment and awaited his death without any perturbation. In fact the devout Parīkṣit hailed the fire-like poison of Takṣaka as a blessing, for he thought the idea of death will speedily arouse dispassion in him. [5]

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1. नान्तर्बहिर्दिवा नक्तमन्यस्मादपि चायुधैः ।
न भूमौ नाम्बरे मृत्युर्न नरैर्न मृगैरपि ॥
व्यसुभिर्वाऽसुमद्भिर्वा सुरासुरमहोरगैः ।
अप्रतिद्वन्द्वतां युद्धे ऐकपत्यं च देहिनाम् ॥
सर्वेषां लोकपालानां महिमानं यथाऽऽत्मनः ।
तपोयोगप्रभावाणां यन्न रिष्यति कर्हिचित् ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 3. 36–38.
2. यः पञ्चहायनो मात्रा प्रातराशाय याचितः ।
तन्नैच्छद् रचयन् यस्य सपर्यां बाललीलया ॥ Ibid. P. III. 2. 2.
3. ततः परीक्षिद् द्विजवर्यशिक्षया महीं महाभागवतः शशास ह । etc.,
Ibid. I. 16. 1.
धर्मपालो नरपतिः स तु सम्राट् बृहच्छ्रवाः ।
साक्षान्महाभागवतो राजर्षिर्हयमेधयाट् ।
क्षुत्तृट्श्रमयुतो दीनो नैवास्मच्छापमर्हति ॥ Ibid. I. 18. 46.
4. ब्रह्मकोपोत्थिताद् यस्तु तक्षकात् प्राणविप्लवात् ।
न सम्मुमोहोरुभयाद् भगवत्यर्पिताशयः ॥ Ibid. I. 18. 2.
5. स चिन्तयन्नित्थमथाशृणोद् यथा मुनेः सुतोक्तो निर्ऋतिस्तक्षकाख्यः ।
स साधु मेने नचिरेण तक्षकानलं प्रसक्तस्य विरक्तिकारणम् ॥
Ibid. I. 19. 4.

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Nāmopāsana or Nāmasaṅkīrtana

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions the utterance of the divine name as one of the nine forms of bhakti. The nine forms of bhakti have been mentioned later in this chapter.

Nāmopāsana is being dealt here separately as the stress on nāmajapa is a special feature of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

In the Ṛgveda we have only the śastra mantras i.e., mantras which are recited. Nāmajapa was, perhaps, unknown to the vedic seers. In the Sāmaveda there are stotra mantras namely mantras which are sung to tune. Nāmajapa seems to be unknown at this stage as well. The Atharvaveda again seems to be unacquainted with Nāmajapa. But when we come to the Upaniṣads the japa of words like Om, Hīm, Hūm etc., are not only mentioned but advocated strongly as means of meditation on the Supreme Soul.[1] Thus the Chāndogyopaniṣad (one of the oldest Upaniṣads) has many mantras proclaiming the greatness of Praṇava. Even here it is only certain abstract words which are chosen for japa and the development is to continue in the Bhagavad Gītā. Thus the next stage in the progress of Nāmajapa is in the Bhagavad Gītā. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that "The letter Om stands for Brahman."[2] The contribution of the Gītā consists not in proclaiming the greatness of the letter Om but in the declaration made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa that "whoever thinks of Me constantly without any other thought, to him I am easily accessible."[3] Here the japa is not restricted to any one

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1. (a) ओमित्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथमुपासीत ।
ओमिति ह्युद्गायति तस्योपव्याख्यानम् ॥ Chānd. Up. I. 1. 1.
(b) सर्वे वेदा यत् पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद् वदन्ति ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत् ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्योमित्येतत् ॥
Kaṭha. Up. I. 2. 15.
(c) लोकेषु पञ्चविधं सामोपासीत पृथिवी हिङ्कारः ।
अग्निः प्रस्तावोऽन्तरिक्षमुद्गीथ आदित्यः प्रतिहारो द्यौर्निधनमित्यूर्ध्वेषु ॥
Chānd. Up. II. 2. 1.
2. ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ Gīta. VIII. 13.
3. अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ Ibid. VIII. 14.

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letter. The 'Me' here stands for the Supreme Soul and only the constant thought or japa of 'Me' is required.

The Gītā is usually described as the bhāṣya of the Upaniṣads; namely in it are simplified the abstract thoughts of the Upaniṣads. Thus, here, the Gītā simplifies Nāmajapa considerably from Om, Hīm, Hūm etc. to just any word denoting the Supreme. It is not restricted to words like Om, Hīm and Hūm.

The 'Me' of the Bhagavad Gītā (given above) is not defined. It can be any word standing for the Highest Being. Here the Bhāgavata Purāṇa steps in to clarify the idea. This Purāṇa is said to be the bhāṣya of the Gītā. The Upaniṣadic thoughts simplified in the Gītā are not only further clarified in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa but are illustrated with examples. Thus the Bhāgavata Purāṇa proclaims that any name of Lord Vāsudeva like Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Keśava can be chosen for japa and the result is eternal bliss for the devotees. Here there are no ambiguities. The thought and idea is clear. Nāmajapa is declared to be the most effective form of bhakti in the Kali age. [1] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not stop here. It goes further and says that Nāmajapa whether done consciously or unconsciously leads one to mukti. [2] The story of Ajāmila is related to illustrate the truth of the efficacy of Nāmajapa.

Ajāmila, a brāhmaṇa, had taken to bad ways and marrying a Śūdra harlot led a life of sin and shame. He had many children by this woman and the last boy was named Nārāyaṇa.[3] When the time of death came Ajāmila was thinking of his son Nārāyaṇa and also called out for him repeatedly. [4] He

1. कलिं सभाजयन्त्यार्या गुणज्ञाः सारभागिनः ।
यत्र संकीर्तनेनैव सर्वः स्वार्थोऽभिलभ्यते ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 5. 36.
कलेर्दोषनिधे राजन्नस्ति ह्येको महान् गुणः ।
कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसङ्गः परं व्रजेत् ॥ Ibid. XII. 3. 51.
2. Quoted earlier in Chapter I.
3. तस्य प्रवयसः पुत्रा दश तेषां तु योऽवमः ।
बालो नारायणो नाम्ना पित्रोश्च दयितो भृशम् ॥ Ibid. P. VI. 1. 24.
4. स पाशहस्तांस्त्रीन् दृष्ट्वा पुरुषान् भृशदारुणान् ।
वक्रतुण्डानूर्ध्वरोम्ण आत्मानं नेतुमागतान् ॥
दूरे क्रीडनकासक्तं पुत्रं नारायणाह्वयम् ।
प्लावितेन स्वरेणोच्चैराजुहावाकुलेन्द्रियः ॥ Ibid. VI. 1. 28–29.

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thus died with the name Nārāyaṇa on his lips. We now come to the interesting part of this story. The messengers of Yama appeared ready to carry away Ajāmila to the world he deserved in keeping with his evil deeds. But, on the other hand, the messengers of Lord Viṣṇu had arrived there in response to the utterance of Nārāyaṇa's name by Ajāmila.[1] Though Ajamila had called out to his son Nārāyaṇa and not to the Supreme God, still the mere utterance of Lord Viṣṇu's name was sufficient to secure his protection. An argument ensued between the two groups of messengers and here it is said that the utterance of the name of Lord Viṣṇu, even without intending to invoke the Lord, will ensure atonement of any kind of sin.[2] Further it is mentioned that a sinner is not purified to that extent through fasting and other processes of expiation recommended by the expositors of the Vedas as he will be by words standing as names of Śrī Hari 'for the utterance of such words puts him in mind of the (divine) attributes of the glorious Lord and draws Him towards the Supreme bliss.'[3] Thus expounding the efficacy of the divine name the messengers of Viṣṇu released Ajāmila from the grip of death. Ajāmila woke up as from a trance remembering the incidents as in a dream. He determined to change his way of life and accordingly settled down on the bank of the Gaṅgā at Haridvāra and concentrated on Śrī Hari. By gradually controlling the various senses he quitted the earthly body at Haridvāra and reached the heavenly abode of Vaikuṇṭha.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa repeatedly asserts that the utterance of the divine name need not be done consciously to produce

1. निशम्य म्रियमाणस्य ब्रुवतो हरिकीर्तनम् ।
भर्तुर्नाम महाराज पार्षदाः सहसाऽऽपतन् ॥ Bhā. P. VI. 1. 30.
2. एतेनैव ह्यघोनोऽस्य कृतं स्यादघनिष्कृतम् ।
यदा नारायणायेति जगाद चतुरक्षरम् ॥
स्तेनः सुरापो मित्रध्रुग्ब्रह्महा गुरुतल्पगः ।
स्त्रीराजपितृगोहन्ता ये च पातकिनोऽपरे ॥
सर्वेषामप्यघवतामिदमेव सुनिष्कृतम् ।
नामव्याहरणं विष्णोर्यतस्तद्विषया मतिः ॥ Ibid. VI. 2. 8–10.
3. न निष्कृतैरुदितैर्ब्रह्मवादिभिस्तथा विशुद्ध्यत्यघवान् व्रतादिभिः ।
यथा हरेर्नामपदैरुदाहृतैस्तदुत्तमश्लोकगुणोपलम्भकम् ॥ Ibid. VI. 2. 11.

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its effect. "Any name of the Lord of excellent renown which is distinctly pronounced whether knowingly or unknowingly destroys a man's sins just as a fire consumes the fuel (under all circumstances, no matter whether it has been kindled by a man who knows its burning properties or by an innocent child who is unaware of its burning capacity)." Further it mentions that "just as a medicine possessing the highest potency is sure to produce its salutary effect even on one who is unaware of its efficacy, though taken by chance, so does the Lord's name reveal its efficacy even in the case of him who is unaware of it when uttered by him." [1]

Another contribution of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in the field of Nāmajapa is the performance of japa collectively or in other words Nāmasaṅkīrtana. In Nāmajapa only a single person is concerned. He can utter any divine name of Lord Vāsudeva and salvation will surely come to him. But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is not satisfied with this self-centred attitude of one man. This view of the Bhāgavata has been made clear earlier in Prahlāda's speech. [2] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa thus recommends Nāmasaṅkīrtana i.e. singing the Lord's name in company or in a group. Salvation for all is the aim of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Nāmasaṅkīrtana is the easiest way for the masses to reach Vaikuṇṭha. In such Saṅkīrtanas the psychological appeal is so great that the heart melts with bhakti for the Supreme and tanmayatva is obtained. [3] Madhusūdana Sarasvatī must have experienced this feeling to define

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1. Quoted earlier in Chapter I.
2. Mentioned and quoted earlier in Chapter II.
3. निशम्य कर्माणि गुणानतुल्यान् वीर्याणि लीलातनुभिः कृतानि ।
यदातिहर्षोत्पुलकाश्रुगद्गदं प्रोत्कण्ठ उद्गायति रौति नृत्यति ॥
यदा ग्रहग्रस्त इव क्वचिद् हसत्याक्रन्दते ध्यायति वन्दते जनम् ।
मुहुः श्वसन् वक्ति हरे जगत्पते नारायणेत्यात्ममतिर्गतत्रपः ॥
तदा पुमान् मुक्तसमस्तबन्धनस्तद्भावभावानुकृताशयाकृतिः ।
निर्दग्धबीजानुशयो महीयसा भक्तिप्रयोगेण समेत्यधोक्षजम् ॥
Bhā. P. VII. 7. 34–36.

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bhakti as that which melts the heart.[1] In Nāmasaṅkīrtana there is no distinction of class or creed. Caitanya was one of the bhaktas who effectively practised Nāmasaṅkīrtana as preached by the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.[2] Among his followers was one Yavana Haridāsa and by receiving him as one of his chief disciples Caitanya followed the Bhāgavata principle of castelessness. This Haridāsa, it is said, uttered the Nāma of the Divine Being one lakh times daily.

At the present time in India, the ideal of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has come to stay. Nāmasaṅkīrtana is a common sight in all parts of the country—from the north to the south and from the east to the west.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not restrict Nāmasaṅkīrtana only to those who seek mukti but also to those who have already attained union with the Supreme Soul. Thus II. 1. 11 relates "For those who have developed an aversion for this world and seek to attain the fearless state, as well as for realized souls that have attained union with God the chanting of Śrī Hari's names has been concluded to be the best means as well as the end."[3]

And Nāmasaṅkīrtana not only purifies the man who utters the divine name but also one who hears him uttering it. Thus

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1. द्रुतस्य भगवद्धर्माद्धारावाहिकताङ्गता ।
सर्वेशे मनसो वृत्तिर्भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥ Śrīmad Bhakti Rasāyanam I. 3.
भगवान् परमानन्दस्वरूपस्स्वयमेव हि ।
मनो गतस्तदाकारो रसतामेति पुष्कलम् ॥ Ibid. I. 10.

2. क्वचिद् रुदति वैकुण्ठचिन्ताशबलचेतनः ।
क्वचिद्धसति तच्चिन्ताह्लाद उद्गायति क्वचित् ॥
नदति क्वचिदुत्कण्ठो विलज्जो नृत्यति क्वचित् ।
क्वचित् तद्भावनायुक्तस्तन्मयोऽनुचकार ह ॥
क्वचिदुत्पुलकस्तूष्णीमास्ते संस्पर्शनिर्वृतः ।
अस्पन्दप्रणयानन्दसलिलामीलितेक्षणः ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 4. 39–41.

These verses in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa represent a true picture of Caitanya's life. He was directly influenced by these statements and practised them in his life.

3. एतन्निर्विद्यमानानामिच्छतामकुतोभयम् ।
योगिनां नृप निर्णीतं हरेर्नामानुकीर्तनम् ॥ Ibid. P. II. 1. 11.

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X. 34. 17 runs "Anyone uttering Your Name purifies at once all those that hear him as well as himself." [1]

And the Kali age which is condemned unequivocally for its evils is hailed as the possessor of one great virtue, namely in this age a mortal is freed from all attachment and reaches the highest goal by merely singing the Name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. "What is attained in the Satyayuga by contemplating on Lord Viṣṇu, in Treta through the performance of sacrifices and in Dvāpara through worship and service of the Lord is attained in Kali by uttering the Name of Śrī Hari." [2]

Bhakti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

In the Gītā we find mention of four different types of bhaktas. [3] There is the bhakta whose bhakti is actuated by some distress and who seeks relief in God. The second kind of bhakta is the one eager for knowledge while the third type of bhakti is a purely materialistic one aiming at worldly desires and pleasures. The fourth is called a Jñānin in the Gītā. He has no ulterior motive but worships God for His own sake.

Four types of bhaktas

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa explains these four different types of bhaktas clearly according to the way in which they worship the Deity. Thus one who is devoted to the Lord with a mind full of violence, hypocrisy and jealousy is called a Tāmasika bhakta. (This is the ārta of the Gītā). A Rājasika bhakta worships God with a view to gain objects of the senses, fame and power. This is the materialistic bhakta of the Gītā. A Sāttvika devotee is he who adores God with the thought of

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1. ..... ब्रह्मदण्डाद् विमुक्तोऽहं सद्यस्तेऽच्युत दर्शनात् ।
   यन्नाम गृह्णन्नखिलान् श्रोतॄनात्मानमेव च ।
   सद्यः पुनाति किं भूयस्तस्य स्पृष्टः पदा हि ते ॥ Bhā. P. X. 34. 17.
2. कृते यद् ध्यायतो विष्णुं त्रेतायां यजतो मखैः ।
   द्वापरे परिचर्यायां कलौ तद्धरिकीर्तनात् ॥ Ibid. XII. 3. 52.
3. चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
   आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ Gita. VI. 16.

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destroying the bondage of actions. This corresponds to the Jijñāsu (one eager for knowledge) of the Gītā. And finally the Bhāgavata describes the Nirguṇa bhakta (Jñānin in the Gītā) who has absolutely no motive in view. His mind just enters into the all-pervading Deity "like that of the waters of the Gaṅgā towards the ocean." [1] It is a constant meditation on the Divine and every act is dedicated to God and done for His pleasure and enjoyment.

The Devī Bhāgavata recognizes sāttvika bhakti as the highest and calls it parā-bhakti—"a state in which the individual mind remains fixed upon the Deity as continuously as the flow of oil." This bhakti is unmotivated by any desire. [2]

Both the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Bhagavad Gītā do not rule out knowledge as a means to salvation. In fact a Nirguṇa bhakta is very often described as a jñānin. There are places where jñāna yoga itself is spoken of as the best means for the highest bliss. [3] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa glorifies knowledge in these words [4] :—"The knowers of Truth declare knowledge alone as the Reality—that knowledge which does not admit of duality, in other words, which is indivisible and one without a second and which is called by different names such as Brahma (the Absolute), Paramātmā and Bhagavān." But it

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1. अभिसंधाय यो हिंसां दम्भं मात्सर्यमेव वा ।
संरम्भी भिन्नदृग् भावं मयि कुर्यात् स तामसः ॥
विषयानभिसंधाय यश ऐश्वर्यमेव वा ।
अर्चादावर्चयेद् यो मां पृथग्भावः स राजसः ॥
कर्मनिर्हारमुद्दिश्य परस्मिन् वा तदर्पणम् ।
यजेद् यष्टव्यमिति वा पृथग्भावः स सात्त्विकः ॥
मद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्वगुहाशये ।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गङ्गाम्भसोऽम्बुधौ ॥
लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम् ।
अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥ Bhā. P. III. 29. 8–12.

2. हेतुस्तु तत्र को वापि न कदाचिद् भवेदपि ।

3. श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ Gīta. IV. 33.

4. वदन्ति तत्तत्त्वविदस्तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।
ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 11.

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is in I. 2. 12 [1] that we recognize the keynote of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, namely, its attempt to reconcile all the three yogas and have for its only aim the realization of the Supreme Truth. Thus it says—"Sages who are full of faith perceive that Truth as their own self in their own heart through Devotion coupled with Knowledge and Dispassion and acquired through listening to the scriptures." At the stage of perfection jñāna and bhakti are included in each other and are not exclusive. The same is true of karma yoga as well for actions being disinterestedly performed it presupposes knowledge of the true nature of the soul and Paramātman. The knowledge that guṇas alone are active and the soul is untouched by them is a part of the true karma yogin. [2] The fact is that all the three yogas, though laying emphasis on three different attitudes merge into one another imperceptibly and in perfection are one and the same. In order to suit the tastes of different individuals we have three different yogas. And in a similar way in order to cater to the wishes of different types of bhaktas, bhaktiyoga itself is said to be practised in various ways.

Nine-fold bhakti

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa bhakti can be practised in nine ways, namely, hearing the names, praises and stories of Lord Viṣṇu, chanting them, remembering Him, offering worship to Him, saluting Him, dedicating all one's actions to Him, cultivating friendship with Him and offering one's own body as well as one's dependants and belongings to Him. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa adds that if these nine features are found united in a man then there is no higher learning than that. [3]

1. तच्छ्रद्दधाना मुनयो ज्ञानवैराग्ययुक्तया ।
पश्यन्त्यात्मनि चात्मानं भक्त्या श्रुतगृहीतया ॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 12.

2. प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥
तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ Gīta. III. 27–28.

3. श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥
इति पुंसार्पिता विष्णौ भक्तिश्चेन्नवलक्षणा ।
क्रियते भगवत्यद्धा तन्मन्येऽधीतमुत्तमम् ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 5. 23–4.

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It will be observed here that each preceding stage in the above list leads the devotee to the next one till finally he becomes a full-fleged bhakta having all the nine virtues. These succeeding stages lead a bhakta into increasing grades of intimacy with the Supreme. Thus listening to the Lord's stories leads one to singing His praise and remembering them, which gradually develops into worshipping the One Who is praised by pādasevanam, arcanam and vandanam. The next stage is complete service to the Deity out of love and admiration for Him which slowly develops into friendship and ends in giving oneself up to Him. (Ātmanivedanam).

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Bhakti practised in this nine-fold way is the perfect dharma. This is an age old precept going back to the time of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says : "The Self should be realized—should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon. When the self is realized by being heard of, reflected on and meditated upon, all this is known." [1] By listening, reflecting and meditating, the Upaniṣads say, Truth can be realized. Thus listening in the Upaniṣad (śrotavyaḥ) corresponds to śravaṇam or again hearing in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Reflecting on what one has heard will lead to praising the object of one's thoughts, remembering It and worshipping It. Thus mantavyaḥ in the Upaniṣad corresponds to kīrtanam, smaraṇam, pādasevanam, arcanam and vandanam. Meditation or deep concentration is the next step which will slowly lead one to give oneself up to Him. Thus nididhyāsitavyaḥ corresponds to dāsyam, sakhyam and ātmanivedanam. The Bhagavad Gītā in IV. 34 expresses similar sentiments and exhorts the aspirant to realize the Supreme by devotion, intelligent questioning and service. [2] These qualities practised collectively as well as individually will help one to attain mukti. Ambarīṣa, for instance, besides listening to the Lord's glory practised

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1. ……आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो etc.
Br. Up. II. 4. 5 & IV. 5. 6.

2. तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ Gīta IV. 34.

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kīrtanam, arcanam etc. and was blessed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But, on the other hand, Parīkṣit obtained the same grace through just listening to the various exploits of Bhagavān.

One condition that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa lays down for bhakti is that it should be completely disinterested. The power of disinterested devotion is amplified by the fact that even those who have realized the Truth practise it. Thus Bhāgavata Purāṇa I. 7. 10 tells us that "even sages who delight in the Self alone and the knot of whose ignorance has been cut asunder practise disinterested devotion to Śrī Hari; such are His virtues." [1] This particular verse of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is reputed to have been interpreted in fifty different ways by the enemies of Caitanya to which Caitanya it seems, replied in one hundred and fifty different interpretations.

Each devotee practises bhakti in his own way. Thus some look upon God as a parent and some treat Him as their master. These two types of bhakti can be termed dāsya. But there are others who look upon God as their friend and this type of bhakti is known as sakhya. Arjuna, Uddhava and the cowherd boys are examples of such bhaktas. Vātsalya bhakti, we may say, is the reverse of dāsya bhakti. Thus the love of a teacher for his student, that of a master for his servant and the love of a parent for his child is vātsalya. Vasudeva, Devakī, Nanda and Yaśodā were Vātsalya bhaktas. Another very important type of bhakti is the one in which God is viewed as the husband and the devotee as his wife. This can be called dāsya bhakti but later Vaiṣṇavism has named it as Mādhurya bhakti. The gopīs of Vraja are the unique exponents of this bhakti.

In whatever form bhakti is practised it should be ahaitukī i.e. disinterested. Just as the Gītā preaches disinterested action the Bhāgavata Purāṇa extols disinterested bhakti. Prahlāda is a standing example of this kind of disinterested bhakti and it is said of him that even as a child he did not interest himself in the world and whether "sitting or walking,

1. आत्मारामाश्च मुनयो निर्ग्रन्था अप्युरुक्रमे।
कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिमित्थम्भूतगुणो हरिः॥ Bhā. P. I. 7. 10.

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eating or drinking, lying down or speaking, he was never conscious of these acts, finding himself constantly folded in the arms of Lord Govinda." [1] The Sanaka brothers regarded devotion as its own reward as the Nārada bhakti sūtra tells us.[2]

Bhakti as means and as an end

Bhakti is treated in two different aspects in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the first place Bhakti is regarded as an end in itself or in other words, is identified with Bhagavān. Bhagavān is Himself an embodiment of Bhakti and Bhakti is God Almighty. The second aspect is to view bhakti as a means to the attainment of Supreme Bliss. Bhagavān is the end and bhakti is the means to this end. In Bhāgavata Purāṇa XI. 3. 31 [3] bhakti has been used in both these senses. It runs thus—"Recollecting and making each other recollect Hari, the destroyer of sins, and through bhakti which gives rise to another kind of bhakti (i.e. Bhagavān) the body is thrilled with joy." In this verse bhakti has been used twice. It has been explained in many ways the usual one being to translate the two as love and devotion. But since bhakti itself denotes love, devotion and other allied feelings the second bhakti would be redundant if used that way. But when the first bhakti is taken as the means and the second as the end in itself there is no repetition.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his 'Bhakti Rasāyanam' identifies Bhagavān with bhakti. His definition of bhakti itself conveys this identity. Bhakti is a state, he says, when due to intense devotion the mind melts and flows towards God, Who

1. न्यस्तक्रीडनको वालो जडवत् तन्मनस्तया।
कृष्णग्रहगृहीतात्मा न वेद जगदीदृशम् ॥
आसीनः पर्यटन्नश्नञ्छयानः प्रपिवन् ब्रुवन्।
नानुसंधत्त एतानि गोविन्दपरिरम्भितः ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 4. 37–38.
या प्रीतिरविवेकानां विषयेष्वनपायिनी।
त्वामनुस्मरतः सा मे हृदयान्मापसर्पतु ॥ Viṣ. P. I. 20. 19.
2. स्वयं फलरूपतेति ब्रह्मकुमाराः ॥ Nārada BS. 30.
3. स्मरन्तः स्मारयन्तश्च मिथोऽघौघहरं हरिम्।
भक्त्या संजातया भक्त्या बिभ्रत्युत्पुलकां तनुम् ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 3. 31.

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is reflected in the mind. Tanmayatva is achieved and the mind which was full of bhakti becomes now enveloped by God, Who is the same Bhakti. [1]

Criterion for mukti

A very peculiar feature of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is that here it is not only the righteous and virtuous who shall see God; though it may be true that "the pure in heart shall see God" the result is not entirely forbidden to the "not-pure" in heart as the stories of Śiśupāla, Dantavaktra, Kaṁsa and others amply illustrate.

Thus when Kaṁsa was killed it is said that "he attained after death that very form so difficult to attain." [2] So also the Bhāgavata Purāṇa relates that "an effulgence emitting out of the (dead) body of Śiśupāla entered into the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa before the very eyes of the onlookers." [3] Similarly the soul of Vṛtra is said to have entered and merged into the Lord while all the people were looking. [4]

Yudhiṣṭhira was one of those who watched the attainment of Mukti by Śiśupāla and he expressed his astonishment and doubt to Nārada as follows—"The absorption into Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Reality, (which could not be easily attained even by those exclusively devoted to Him) of Śiśupāla, His bitter enemy, this was indeed most wonderful." [5] "The sinful Śiśupāla as well as the evil-minded Dantavaktra had a grudge against Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever since he (Śiśupāla) began to lisp. [6]

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1. Bhakti Rasāyana I. 3 & I. 10. Quoted earlier in this chapter.
2. स नित्यदोद्विग्नधिया तमीश्वरं पिबन् वदन् वा विचरन् स्वपञ्छ्वसन् ।
   ददर्श चक्रायुधमग्रतो यस्तदेव रूपं दुरवापमाप ॥ Bhā. P. X. 44. 39.
3. चैद्यदेहोत्थितं ज्योतिर्वासुदेवमुपाविशत् ।
   पश्यतां सर्वभूतानामुल्केव भुवि खाच्च्युता ॥ Ibid. X. 74. 45.
4. वृत्रस्य देहान्निष्क्रान्तमात्मज्योतिरविन्दम ।
   पश्यतां सर्वलोकानामलोकं समपद्यत ॥ Ibid. VI. 12. 35.
5. अहो अत्यद्भुतं ह्येतद् दुर्लभैकान्तिनामपि
   वासुदेवे परे तत्त्वे प्राप्तिश्चैद्यस्य विद्विषः ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 15.
6. दमघोषसुतः पाप आरभ्य कलभाषणात् ।
   सम्प्रत्यमर्षी गोविन्दे दन्तवक्त्रश्च दुर्मतिः ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 17.

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How did they attain absorption directly into the aforesaid Lord whose reality cannot be easily grasped ?" [1] It was a problem which even Yudhiṣṭhira, the foremost adherent of dharma, could not understand.

Nārada then expounds the philosophy of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in order to clarify Yudhiṣṭhira's doubts. Identification of the individual soul with the body results in the notions of 'I' and 'Mine' and feelings of pleasure and pain. [2] Feelings of hatred or enmity are also the creation of this identification. But the result of such hatred towards God is constant thought of the Supreme oblivious to all other interests. The Lord is concerned with this thought alone. He Himself is the Supreme Truth and does not concern Himself with the false notions of enmity or hatred which goes on in the minds of men like Śiśupāla. When the heart thinks about Śrī Kṛṣṇa constantly without a moment's respite the reward is obtained irrespective of whether the motive was hatred or love. Thus Nārada says "One should (anyhow) fix one's mind on Him either through constant enmity or through devotion or fear or affection or love. By doing so he will in no way perceive anything else (than the Lord)." [3]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not stop there; it says that 'A mortal may not attain such absorption into Him by fixing his mind on Him through devotion as through constant hostility." [4] Hatred and jealousy are stronger feelings compared to love and devotion. Thus when there is hatred the object of hatred is always present in the mind and what is more important with an intensity of feeling far greater than that which accompanies love or devotion. Thus an enemy

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1. कथं तस्मिन् भगवति दुरवग्राह्यधामनि ।
पश्यतां सर्वलोकानां लयमीयतुरञ्जसा ॥ Bhā. P. VII. 1. 19.
2. हिंसा तदभिमानेन दण्डपारुष्ययोर्यथा ।
वैषम्यमिह भूतानां ममाहमिति पार्थिव ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 23.
3. तस्माद् वैरानुबन्धेन निर्वैरेण भयेन वा ।
स्नेहात् कामेन वा युञ्ज्यात् कथंचिन्नेक्षते पृथक् ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 25.
4. यथा वैरानुबन्धेन मर्त्यस्तन्मयतामियात् ।
न तथा भक्तियोगेन इति मे निश्चिता मतिः ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 26.

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of Lord Kṛṣṇa can attain mukti earlier than one who devotes himself in a friendly spirit to the Supreme. The story of Jaya and Vijaya exemplifies this statement. When Jaya and Vijaya were cursed by the four mind born sons to be born on earth Viṣṇu asked them (the sages) to "so ordain that reaping the fruit of their transgression they may return to My presence soon." [1] As a result they were cursed to be born in the demonaic species so that firmly united in the thought of the Supreme through concentration of mind, intensified by hatred, they would return to Vaikuṇṭha in the course of three births. [2] Jaya and Vijaya were born as Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu in their first birth, as Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa in their second and as Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra in their third birth. If Śiśupāla and the others could attain mukti why was Vena excluded from this favour ? This seems contradictory. But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa itself answers the question by saying that Vena did not constantly think of the Divine Being. [3]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa clarifies its statements by examples. Thus it says "The insect imprisoned by a wasp in (its nest on) a wall and constantly thinking of the latter through (intensity of) hatred and fear attains a form similar to the wasp." [4] The same example is repeated in the eleventh skandha making it even clearer. It runs thus—"Thinking of the peśaskṛt (wasp) and being made by him to enter into the nest, an

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1. तन्मे स्वभर्तुरवसायमलक्षमाणौ युष्मद्व्यतिक्रमगतिं प्रतिपद्य सद्यः ।
भूयो ममान्तिकमितां तदनुग्रहो मे यत् कल्पतामचिरतो भृतयोर्विवासः ॥
Bhā. P. III. 16. 12.

2. एतौ सुरेतरगतिं प्रतिपद्य सद्यः संरम्भसम्भृतसमाध्यनुबद्धयोगौ ।
भूयः सकाशमुपयास्यत आशु यो वः शापो मयैव निमितस्तदवैत विप्राः ॥
Ibid. III. 16. 26.
एवं शप्तौ स्वभवनात् पतन्तौ तैः कृपालुभिः ।
प्रोक्तौ पुनर्जन्मभिर्वां त्रिभिर्लोकाय कल्पताम् ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 38.

3. कृतमोऽपि न वेनः स्यात् पञ्चानां पुरुषं प्रति ।
तस्मात् केनाप्युपायेन मनः कृष्णे निवेशयेत् ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 31.

4. कीटः पेशस्कृता रुद्धः कुड्यायां तमनुस्मरन् ।
संरम्भभययोगेन विन्दते तत्सरूपताम् ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 24.

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insect even without casting off its original form becomes metamorphosed into the form of the peśaskṛt." [1]

The aim of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa all along is to emphasize the importance of constant meditation on the Supreme Being irrespective of the motive behind it. In one place the Purāṇa goes to the extent of saying that "meditation is emancipation."[2] There are examples of all kinds of individuals in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa who attained salvation and their only common characteristic was constant meditation on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. "The cowherd women (of Vraja) attained Him through kāma, Kaṁsa through fear, Śiśupāla and other kings like him through hatred; the Vṛṣṇis through kinship; you (the Pāṇdava brothers) through attachment and we (the sage Nārada and others) through devotion."[3] Bhaktimārga is open to everyone and God is the Protector of all His children. It has been always pointed out that the bane of Hindu Society is its caste consciousness. But in Bhakti-yoga we have a solution to this age long question. In fact bhaktas like Caitanya, Kabīrdās, Tukārām and others are not a little responsible for the change in outlook towards members of the lower castes that has taken place in recent years. Rāmānuja in his commentary on the Gītā has made it clear that in the eyes of God there is no difference between man and man. [4] The universality of bhakti yoga or the Bhāgavata religion is proved by the Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa when it says :—"The Kirātas, the Hūṇas, the Āndhras, the Pulindas, the Pulkasas, the Ābhiras, the Kaṅkas, the Yavanas, the Khasas and other sinful races no less than others of sinful conduct are purged of their sins even by taking refuge in

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1. कीटः पेशस्कृतं ध्यायन् कुड्यां तेन प्रवेशितः ।
   याति तत्सात्मतां राजन् पूर्वरूपमसंत्यजन् ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 9. 23.
2. ध्यायंस्तन्मयतां यातो भावो हि भवकारणम् ॥ Ibid. X. 74. 76.
3. गोप्यः कामाद् भयात् कंसो द्वेषाच्चैद्यादयो नृपाः ।
   सम्बन्धाद् वृष्णयः स्नेहाद् यूयं भक्त्या वयं विभो ॥ Ibid. VII. 1. 30.
4. जातितश्चाकारतः स्वभावतो ज्ञानतश्चात्यन्तोत्कृष्टापकृष्टरूपेण वर्तमानेषु सर्वेषु भूतेषु समाश्रयणीयत्वेन समोऽहम् ॥ (Gītā—Rāmānuja Bhāṣya. 9. 29.)

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those who depend on Him. To that All-powerful Lord we offer our greetings." [1] The Bhagavad Gītā expresses a similar idea in IX. 32 [2] where it is said that whether women, Vaiśyas or people who have committed sin, whoever they may be, if they devote themselves to Bhagavān they will attain the highest abode.

The Rāsalīla forms an important part of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and also one of its special features. A general description of the Rāsa has been given in Chapter II. A critical study of the Rāsalīla is being attempted here.

Criticism

The Rāsalīla has come in for a great amount of criticism. The question repeatedly asked is whether it is the writing of an immoral author or whether the story has some deeper significance.

Interpretation of the Rāsalīla

In the first place the Rāsalīla might be an exaggerated account of the simple fact that Kṛṣṇa sang and danced with the gopīs. That such dances with maidens were in vogue is illustrated by Bharata's definition of the Rāsa dance. [3] Even today such group dancing among men and women is common throughout the country. Both men and women take part in most of the folk dances of the land.

Allegory

What is more likely is that the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa used the Rāsa as an allegory to illustrate a deep spiritual truth. This is more plausible for the author believes in

1. किरातहूणान्ध्रपुलिन्दपुल्कसा आभीरकङ्का यवनाः खसादयः।
येऽन्ये च पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाः शुध्यन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवे नमः॥
Bhā. P. II. 4. 18.

2. (a) मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम्॥ Gītā. IX. 32.
(b) अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः॥ Ibid. IX. 30.

3. नटैर्गृहीतकण्ठानामन्योन्यात्तकरश्रियाम्।
नर्तकीनां भवेद् रासो मण्डलीभूय नर्तनम्॥ Bharata Nāṭyaśāstra.

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driving home the truth through the medium of allegories. Thus earlier in the fourth skandha there is related the story of Purañjana in the form of an allegory illustrating the nature of the Supreme Soul and the individual soul. The author specifically states that the story is an allegory saying that Purañjana should be understood as the Jīva. [1] It will be of interest to note in this connection that Rabīndranath Tagore interprets the Meghadūta of Kālidāsa as an allegory where the individual soul cries out to the Supreme Soul. The Rāsa-līla also is employed as an allegory by the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, in order to illustrate the Supreme Truth.

The way in which the author describes the Rāsa also lends support to the theory of allegory. Thus in the very first verse of the Rāsa it is made clear that the Rāsalīla was made possible through the yogamāyā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [2] Yogamāyā is the divine potency of the Lord and the author establishes the fact that the Rāsa was possible only with the help of yogic power. The epithets used for Kṛṣṇa in the Rāsalīla also stress the importance of yoga. Thus yogī, yogeśvara and yogeśvareśvara are repeatedly used. [3] It was through yoga that Kṛṣṇa could station Himself between every two gopīs [4] and also make the gopīs present at the sides of their husbands during the Rāsa. [5]

Kṛṣṇa as a Yogī

That Kṛṣṇa was a great yogī is amply proved by the Bhagavad Gītā as well. Thus in the fourth chapter of the Gītā Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna how at the beginning of the Kalpa He taught Sūrya the yoga doctrine. This yoga somehow got lost

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1. पुरुषं पुरञ्जनं विद्याद् यद् व्यनक्त्यात्मनः परम् ।
एकद्वित्रिचतुष्पादं बहुपादमपादकम् ॥ Bhā. P. V. 29. 2.
2. .....वीक्ष्य रन्तुं मनश्चक्रे योगमायामुपाश्रितः । Ibid. X. 29. 1.
3. (a) ..... योगेश्वरेश्वरे कृष्णे यत एतद् विमुच्यते ॥ Ibid. X. 29. 16.
(b) इति विक्लवितं तासां श्रुत्वा योगेश्वरेश्वरः प्रहस्य etc. Ibid. X. 29. 42.
4. रासोत्सवः सम्प्रवृत्तो गोपीमण्डलमण्डितः । योगेश्वरेण कृष्णेन तासां मध्ये द्वयोर्द्वयोः । प्रविष्टेन गृहीतानां कण्ठे स्वनिकटं स्त्रियः ॥ Ibid. X. 33. 3.
5. .....मन्यमानाः स्वपार्श्वस्थान् स्वान् स्वान् दारान् व्रजौकसः ॥
Ibid. X. 33. 38.

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and Kṛṣṇa again revived it, which is clear from His own words to Arjuna. He says "That same yoga of yore I have preached to you today etc." [1] Again in the eleventh chapter Arjuna, while requesting Kṛṣṇa to reveal to him His divine form, addresses Him as Yogeśvara knowing fully well that without the power of yoga the revelation was not possible. [2]

In the ninth verse of the same adhyāya it is said that Hari who was a great yogī, revealed to Arjuna His divine form. [3] Verse eight of this same adhyāya is significant. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that to see His divine form he (Arjuna) needed divine eyes as the normal ones were deficient for the purpose. [4] Thus yogaśakti could be imparted to bhaktas by Bhagavān Himself as in the case of Arjuna. The author of the Bhāgavata, being a great bhakta, was shown this divine Rāsa through the yogamāyā of Bhagavān.

By stating that the Rāsalīla was possible only through yoga it is made clear that there is no worldly attachment here. It is alaukikī i.e. beyond worldly love. The epithet manmatha-manmatha used for Kṛṣṇa [5] establishes the truth that Kṛṣṇa was the manmatha who had controlled the worldly manmatha. There is no worldly passion in this love of the gopīs towards Kṛṣṇa. Thus in the fourth verse of the twentyninth adhyāya

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1. इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥
एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥
स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ Gītā. IV. 1-3.
2. मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ Ibid. XI. 4.
3. एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ Ibid. XI. 9.
4. न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ Ibid. XI. 8.
5. तासामाविरभूच्छौरिः स्मयमानमुखाम्बुजः ।
पीताम्बरधरः स्रग्वी साक्षान्मन्मथमन्मथः ॥ Bhā. P. X. 32. 2.

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it is said that the gopīs hearing the music (of the flute of Kṛṣṇa) went forth to meet Him. [1] Here the music of the flute is the call of the Infinite to the souls, the gopīs. As soon as the call came the bhaktas ran to meet the Supreme.

Power of Yoga

The power of yoga is phenomenal. Thus when Vivekānanda approached Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa with the question as to whether he had seen God, Rāmakṛṣṇa replied in the affirmative. When Vivekānanda wanted Rāmakṛṣṇa to show him God, Rāmakṛṣṇa placed his finger between his eyebrows (ājña cakra). At once Vivekānanda was dazzled by the revelation of the Śakti of Bhagavān. This is nothing but the power of yoga.

Certain verses in the Gītā and the Rāsalīla

It has already been pointed out that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is a bhāṣya of the Gītā. Thus whatever is said here can be traced to the Gītā. The Rāsalīla is no exception. Thus in the fourth adhyāya of the Gītā Bhagavān tells Arjuna that He approaches His bhaktas in whatever way they want. [2] The Lord never disappoints His bhaktas. The gopīs meditated on Kṛṣṇa as their beloved and it was the duty of Him to see that His bhaktas were satisfied. He thus appeared in the form in which the gopīs wanted Him and this idea has been made clear in the Rāsalīla.

That the motive and feelings of the bhaktas must be pure goes without saying. Thus the Bhāgavata Purāṇa repeatedly tells us that the gopīs treated Him as their beloved because He is Preṣṭha. [3] God is the most beloved of all souls and hence there is nothing unnatural in the gopīs' feelings towards the Supreme. The idea that the Self is the most beloved and

1. निशम्य गीतं तदनङ्गवर्धनं व्रजस्त्रियः कृष्णगृहीतमानसाः ।
आजग्मुरन्योन्यमलक्षितोद्यमाः स यत्र कान्तो जवलोलकुण्डलाः ॥
Ibid. X. 29. 4.

2. ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ Gītā. IV. 11.

3. तं विलोक्यागतं प्रेष्ठं प्रीत्युत्फुल्लदृशोऽबलाः etc. Bhā. P. X. 32. 3.

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everything else is loved only for the sake of the Self and not for its own sake is made clear as early as in the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. [1]

The Rāsalīla also amplifies two other statements in the Gītā. Thus in the ninth adhyāya of the Gītā Bhagavān says that if His bhaktas have Him constantly in mind and pray to Him then they will automatically realize the Supreme. [2] The same verse is repeated with slight changes in the eighteenth adhyāya. [3] The next verse goes a step further and tells the bhaktas that if they give up all other thoughts and approach Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the sole refuge then He would take His bhaktas to eternal bliss. [4]

The Rāsalīla has these verses of the Gītā as its basis. Bhakti according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is a state when the mind is constantly occupied with the thought of Bhagavān. Thus the gopīs were bhaktas of the highest order as they were oblivious to every other thought except Kṛṣṇa. Again the gopīs were not worried about any other single object in the world and surrendered themselves completely to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus they had to be satisfied by Vāsudeva as He Himself had laid prapatti or self-surrender as a condition for mukti in the Gītā.

Test of a bhakta

A bhakta has to put up with a number of difficulties and Bhagavān usually tests his bhaktas with mounting obstacles in order to verify the constancy of their love for Him. The gopīs were no exceptions and they had to steal away from their homes unobserved by their husbands, parents and other relatives. Their obstacles were great but when the Supreme Soul

1. स होवाच, न वा अरे पत्युः कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय पतिः प्रियो भवति। न वा अरे जायायै कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति, आत्मनस्तु कामाय जाया प्रिया भवति etc. etc. Br. Up. II. 4. 5.
2. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः॥ Gītā. IX. 34.
3. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे॥ Ibid. XVIII. 65.
4. Quoted earlier in this chapter.

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calls forth there is no stopping the bhaktas. They will go come what may. Here there are no worldly desires left. All worldly notions of right and wrong, shame and honour have no place here. The devotee is immersed in divine love oblivious to every other feeling. Individual existence merges into Divine existence. The desertion of home and husband is the "symbol of the soul's surrender to the Heavenly Bridegroom."

The gopīs, while observing the Kātyāyanī vow, were bathing in the Jamunā keeping their clothes on the bank. Kṛṣṇa took away the clothes to the top of a tree and consented to give them away only when the gopīs came out of the water and begged for them with uplifted arms. This the gopīs did and the Rāsalīla was a reward for their whole-hearted devotion. A woman can sacrifice wealth, reputation, worldly honour, fortune and health but not her inborn shyness. But the gopīs sacrificed even their shyness. When the soul is surrendered completely to the Supreme there is no fear of any sort.

Interpretation of the Vastraharaṇa

This story of the stealing away of the garments by Kṛṣṇa is intriguing as well as interesting. It was not unusual for the womenfolk of certain parts in India to remove all their clothes before getting down into a tank or river for a bath. They usually left their clothes on the bank of the river or tank and went into the water. In the Punjab, it is said, that women bathing without clothes on was a common sight till recently. It was probably also prevalent in certain other parts of the country. Assuming that the author of the Bhāgavata was familiar with the habits of the people of Āryāvarta, this stealing of the garments can be explained easily. Thus when Kṛṣṇa saw the clothes of women lying on the bank he, being a naughty child, (naughtiness in childhood being the sign of great men in general) carried them away and gave them back only when he was appeased with uplifted arms.

The stories given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa need not be fictitious. What is more probable is that the incidents related actually happened. The author narrates them but does not stop there. He gives the incidents another hidden meaning

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and uses them as allegories to serve his greater purpose of the search after Truth.

Thus, as already stated, the Purañjana legend has been treated as an allegory by the author. In the stealing of the garments also the author tries to tell us repeatedly that the souls' surrender to the Supreme must be unconditional. The gopīs had to lift up their arms in order to get back their garments. It is the same with any bhakta. His surrender must be wholehearted if he wants to please his God.

The author employs the Rāsalīla as another allegory illustrating in vivid language and imagery the relation between the Supreme Being and His bhaktas.

The duty of a wife

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa is very clear about the duties of women and does not allow any blemish to her chastity. Thus it says "Intercourse with a paramour on the part of a woman of noble pedigree is a bar to heaven, scandalous, mean, a source of trouble, fraught with fear and hateful everywhere." [1]

When extramarital love is criticized in such strong language it goes without saying that the gopīs' love for Kṛṣṇa was not of this world. The relation of Kṛṣṇa to the gopīs is that of Nirguṇa Brahman to Saguṇa Brahman, that of Puruṣa to Prakṛti, that of the Sun to its shadow where the sun represents the Supreme Soul and the shadow the individual soul. As early as the Kaṭhopaniṣad the Supreme and individual souls are denoted as the sun and the shadow. [2] In the Rāsalīla also similar expressions are used proving that the author, who was a great vedic scholar, used similar words to convey the same sense. Thus it is said here that "Śrī Kṛṣṇa sported with those lovely women of Vraja as an infant would play with its own reflections." [3] Again Kṛṣṇa surrounded by the gopīs is

1. अस्वर्ग्यमयशस्यं च फल्गु कृच्छ्रं भयावहम् ।
जुगुप्सितं च सर्वत्र औपपत्यं कुलस्त्रियाः ॥ Bhā. P. X. 29. 26.

2. छायातपौ ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति पञ्चाग्नयो ये च त्रिणाचिकेताः ॥
Kaṭha. Up. I. 3. 1.

3. एवं परिष्वङ्गकराभिमर्शस्निग्धेक्षणोद्दामविलासहासैः ।
रेमे रमेशो व्रजसुन्दरीभिर्यथार्भकः स्वप्रतिबिम्बविभ्रमः ॥ Bhā. P. X. 33. 17.

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compared to Puruṣa surrounded by his śaktis.[1] That the love depicted here is unworldly is also proved by the fact that Kṛṣṇa was only a boy of about seven years old.[2] The Vastraharaṇa is given in the twentysecond adhyāya of the tenth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Here Kṛṣṇa tells the gopīs that they will sport with Him during the coming autumnal nights.[3] The Katyāyanī vow was in the Hemanta season and therefore the Rāsalīla took place in the autumn of the same year according to Kṛṣṇa's own words. Now in the twentysixth adhyāya where Kṛṣṇa holds up the Govardhana mountain he is called a boy of seven.[4] The Rāsalīla is described in adhyāyas 29–33 and thus Kṛṣṇa could have been only a few months older than seven. Another question here is how could Śrī Kṛṣṇa sport with the gopīṣ by putting his arms over their necks if he were only a boy of seven. The answer again is that Kṛṣṇa was a great yogī and resorted to His yogamāyā during the Rāsa.

In this divine love there is no place for pride or elation. The moment the gopīs got elated with pride Kṛṣṇa disappeared from their midst.[5] But when they repented, their utter humility and devotion brought back Kṛṣṇa to them. This description as well as the simile of light and shadow make it clear that the Rāsapañcādhyāyī (X. 29–33) was intended as an allegory and formed part of the original Purāṇa.

Doubts clarified

Having related the Rāsalīla the author anticipated the objections to be raised and himself put them in the mouth of

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1. ताभिर्विधूतशोकाभिर्भगवानच्युतो वृतः ।
व्यरोचताधिकं तात पुरुषः शक्तिभिर्यथा ॥ Ibid. X. 32, 10.
2. यः सप्तहायनो बालः करेणैकेन लीलया ।
कथं बिभ्रद् गिरिवरं पुष्करं गजराडिव ॥ Ibid. X. 26. 3.
3. यातावला व्रजं सिद्धा मयेमा रंस्यथ क्षपाः ।
यदुद्दिश्य व्रतमिदं चेरुरार्याचँनं सतीः ॥ Ibid. X. 22. 27.
4. Vide Quotation No. 2. Ibid. X. 26. 3.
5. तासां तत् सौभगमदं वीक्ष्य मानं च केशवः ।
प्रशमाय प्रसादाय तत्रैवान्तरधीयत ॥ Ibid. X. 29. 48.

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king Parīkṣit. Parīkṣit asks Śuka "How did He, the promulgator, Institutor and Conservator of ethical standards commit a transgression in the shape of embracing others' wives, O Holy one ?" [1] For those who understand the true meaning of the Rāsa this doubt would never arise. This question and the answer given are meant only for those who look at the Rāsa in a purely worldly sense. Thus Śuka replies that the great sometime violate dharma but they are not affected by it just as Rudra was not killed by the Kālakūṭa poison. [2] Only the sayings of the great should be followed by the ordinary man and their doings should be imitated only when it is worth following. [3] In the Gītā Kṛṣṇa says that the other men should follow what the great do. [4] Being the bhāṣya of the Gītā the Bhāgavata clarifies that statement here by saying that only those actions which suits one's precepts should be imitated. This is just a restatement of what is said in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad i.e. "only those good deeds of ours should be followed by you and not the others." [5] These objections are only for the ordinary man and the author makes it clear at the end that the Rāsalīla is meant only to make man get exclusively devoted to Him. [6]

Rāsa as a collection of the five Vaiṣṇava rasas

Rāsa also stands for the collection of all the five Vaiṣṇava rasas (Rasānām samūhaḥ). Here in the Rāsalīla we come across all the different Vaiṣṇava rasas like dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, madhura and śānta.

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1. स कथं धर्मसेतूनां वक्ता कर्ताभिरक्षिता ।
प्रतीपमाचरद् ब्रह्मन् परदाराभिमर्शनम् ॥
आप्तकामो यदुपतिः कृतवान् वै जुगुप्सितम् ।
किमभिप्राय एतं नः संशयं छिन्धि सुव्रत ॥ Ibid. X. 33. 28–29.
2. नैतत् समाचरेज्जातु मनसापि ह्यनीश्वरः ।
विनश्यत्याचरन् मौढ्याद् यथारुद्रोऽब्धिजं विषम् ॥ Ibid. X. 33. 31.
3. ईश्वराणां वचः सत्यं तथैवाचरितं क्वचित् ।
तेषां यत् स्ववचोयुक्तं बुद्धिमांस्तत् समाचरेत् ॥ Ibid. X. 33. 32.
4. यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः etc. Gītā III. 21. Quoted earlier in chapter I.
5. यानि अस्माकं सुचरितानि तानि त्वया उपास्यानि नो इतराणि ॥ Taitt. Up.
6. अनुग्रहाय भूतानां मानुषं देहमास्थितः ।
भजते तादृशीः क्रीडा याः श्रुत्वा तत्परो भवेत् ॥ Bhā. P. X. 33. 37.

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In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad Brahman is identified with Rasa i.e. sentiment. [1] Again in the same Upaniṣad it is said that Brahman is Ānanda. [2] Thus Rasa, Ānanda and Brahman are all synonyms. Since the end of life is to attain Ānanda (Brahman) (atyanta duḥkhanivṛtti, paramānandaprāpti) there are two ways leading to it i.e. through Rasāsvāda and through Brahmajñāna.

For the attainment of Ānanda the Vaiṣṇava rhetoricians like Rūpa Gosvāmin, Jīva Gosvāmin, and others have described certain bhakti rasas. Thus they say that in the process of surrender a bhakta passes through five successive stages namely śānta or calm contemplation of the Deity which is succeeded by dāsya or service and worship which develops into sakhya or friendship. Friendship gradually gives place to vātsalya and this finally develops into mādhurya or all-embracing love.

Treating bhakti as a rasa Rūpa Gosvāmin mentions the above five stages i.e. śānta, prīta, (dāsya) preyān, (sakhya) vatsala and madhura as the five mukhya or primary forms of the bhakti rasa. [3] Among these madhura is supposed to be the best. There are seven gauṇa bhaktirasas as well which are hāsya, adbhuta, vīra, karuṇa, raudra, bhayānaka and bībhatsa.

In the Rāsalīla we find these different bhakti rasas. The Ujjvala or madhura bhakti rasa is evident throughout and it is heightened by the sense of dāsya bhakti rasa.

In the initial few lines of the Rāsalīla we come across non-primary bhakti bhāvas like bhayānaka and karuṇa. Thus when Kṛṣṇa tells the gopīs 'Frightful in aspect is this night and characterised by the presence of hideous creatures' [4] we have bhayānaka bhaktibhāva, the sthāyībhāva here being bhaya.

1. रसो वै सः । Taitt. Up.
2. आनन्दो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । Ibid.
3. भवेद् भक्तिरसोऽप्येष मुख्यगौणतया द्विधा । पञ्चधापि रतेरैक्यान्मुख्यस्त्वेक इहोदितः ॥
सप्तधात्र तथा गौण इति भक्तिरसोऽष्टधा । मुख्यस्तु पञ्चधा शान्तः प्रीतः प्रेयांश्च वत्सलः ।
मधुरश्चेत्यमी ज्ञेया यथापूर्वमनुत्तमाः ॥ Bhaktrisāmṛtasindhu, 2.5. 95 & 97.
4. रजन्येषा घोररूपा घोरसत्त्वनिषेविता ।
प्रतियात व्रजं नेह स्थेयं स्त्रीभिः सुमध्यमाः ॥ Bhā. P. X. 29. 19.

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Since bhakti underlies every other emotion it is called bhayānaka bhaktibhāva. Here we cannot call it rasa as only when the bhāva reaches a state of supreme relish that it becomes rasa. But in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa no distinction is drawn between bhāva and rasa. This is made clear in the first skandha itself.[1] The purpose is to give delight to all and hence technical differences between terms like bhāva and rasa are done away with. This view finds support in Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra as well. [2]

Thus then the bhayānaka rasa is depicted in the initial lines of the Rāsa. Similarly on hearing Kṛṣṇa talking to them in a rebuking way the gopīs became sad and angry. In the next few lines i.e. X. 29. 28–41 we get a fine portrayal of the karuṇa and krodha bhakti rasas (bhāvas). Having teased the gopīs Kṛṣṇa decided to sport with them. The description of the play of Kṛṣṇa is an example of the madhura rasa. [3] When Kṛṣṇa disappeared the gopīs grew sad and raved like mad women imitating the actions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Different rasas are represented here. Vipralambha Śṛṅgāra rasa is dominant throughout as the gopīs were grieved sorely at the disappearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The sakhya rasa is clearly delineated here when two gopīs play the role of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and other gopīs behave like cowherd boys. [4] The vīra bhāva is indicated when one gopī treading on another's head and standing on her says

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1. निगमकल्पतरोर्गलितं फलं शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम् ।
पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं मुहुरहो रसिका भुवि भावुकाः ॥ Ibid. I. 1. 3.

It is interesting to note in this connection that all the rasas are expressed or delineated in X. 43. 17. of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Kṛṣṇa is connected with every rasa mentioned here and thus it is proved that all the rasas have as their end Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. The verse runs as follews—

मल्लानामशनिर्नृणां नरवरः स्त्रीणां स्मरो मूर्तिमान् ।
गोपानां स्वजनोऽसतां क्षितिभुजां शास्ता स्वपित्रोः शिशुः ।
मृत्युर्भोजपतेर्विराडविदुषां तत्त्वं परं योगिनां ।
वृष्णीनां परदेवतेति विदितो रङ्गं गतः साग्रजः ॥

2. न भावहीनोऽस्ति रसो न भावो रसवर्जितः ॥ Bharata Nāṭyaśāstra VI. 36.
3. Bhā. P. X. 29. 42–47.
4. कृष्णरामायिते द्वे तु गोपायन्त्यश्च काश्चन etc. Ibid. X. 30. 17.

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"O vile snake clear away. Indeed I am born as the chastiser of the wicked." [1] The next verse also delineates the vīra bhāva. Thus a gopī tells the others "O gopas, look at the terrible forest fire. Shut your eyes at once. I shall easily vouchsafe protection for you." [2] In the next verse when one gopī pretends to act the part of Yaśodā and ties up another gopī (feigning to be Kṛṣṇa) to a mortar (also depicted by yet another gopī) we get the Vātsalya bhakti rasa. [3]

While the gopīs were raving thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa suddenly appeared before them. The whole of the thirtysecond and thirtythird adhyāyas represent the madhura rasa in all its phases. Madhura rasa also includes within itself the sakhya, vātsalya, dāsya and śānta rasas. Thus the gopīs, while playing with Kṛṣṇa, caught hold of his hands as they would of their friends. Here the rasa is sakhya rasa. The śānta rasa is clearly expressed when it is said "that a certain gopī ushered Him into her heart through the hollows of her eyes, shut her eyes and mentally embracing Him stood immersed in bliss like a yogī." [4] Thus madhura rasa is depicted in all its different phases making it clear that the five principal rasas (sakhya, dāsya, vātsalya, madhura and śānta) should be treated not as five different rasas but as one all-embracing rasa which is madhura or ujjvala.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Gāyatrī-mantra

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa admits of different interpretations from various view points. Thus according to one view the whole of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is considered to be an interpretation of the Gāyatrī mantra. Some verses in the text lend support to this theory. [5] This theory is being dealt briefly here.

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1. आरुह्यैका पदाऽऽक्रम्य शिरस्याहापरां नृप ।
   दुष्टाहे गच्छ जातोऽहं खलानां ननु दण्डधृक् ॥ Ibid. X. 30. 21.
2. तत्रैकोवाच हे गोपा दावाग्निं पश्यतोल्वणम् ।
   चक्षूंष्याशवपिदध्वं वो विधास्ये क्षेममञ्जसा ॥ Ibid. X. 30. 22.
3. बद्धान्यया स्रजा काचित् तन्वी तत्र उलूखले ।
   भीता सुदृक् पिधायास्यं भेजे भीतिविडम्बनम् ॥ Ibid. X. 30. 23.
4. तं काचिन्नेत्ररन्ध्रेण हृदिकृत्य निमील्य च ।
   पुलकाङ्ग्युपगुह्यास्ते योगीवानन्दसम्प्लुता ॥ Ibid. X. 32. 8.
5. (a) Bhā. P. I. 1. 1. जन्माद्यस्य……सत्यं परं धीमहि । quoted earlier in chapter II.

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The Gāyatrī mantra is only a meditation on the Supreme. Thus it says "We meditate on that Light (tejas); the Light which is worshipped even by the sun and which guides (propels) our intellect." [1] In the sense of meditation on the Supreme Tejas the whole Bhāgavata can be called a bhāṣya of the Gāyatrī mantra as the text throughout is a meditation on the Supreme Brahman.

Another interesting point is that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not stop at the three-footed Gāyatrī mantra but explains the fourth foot of the Gāyatrī as well. That the Gāyatrī has a fourth foot is proved by the Chāndogyopaniṣad [2] and in V. 7. 14 the Bhāgavata Purāṇa explains this four-footed Gāyatrī thoroughly. It runs thus—"The Light constituting the very essence of the Sun-god, which lies beyond the material plane dispenses the fruit of our actions. It is the same Light which evolved this universe by Its mere thought and again entering it protects the Jīva, seeking Its protection, with Its power of consciousness. We resort to that Light, which propels our intellect." [3]

(b) ओं नमस्तुभ्यं भगवते वासुदेवाय धीमहि । Ibid. VI. 16. 18.

1. ओं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो.नः प्रयोदयात् ॥

2. सैषा चतुष्पदा षड्विधा गायत्री तदेतदृचाभ्यनूक्तम् ॥
तावानस्य महिमा ततो ज्यायाँश्च पूरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य सर्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ Chānd. Up. III. 12. 5-6.
The fourth foot of the Gayatri runs thus—
परो रजसेऽसावदो मा प्रापत् ।

3. परोरजः सवितुर्जातवेदो देवस्य भर्गो मनसेदं जजान । सुरेतसादः पुनराविश्य चष्टे हंसं गृध्राणं नृषद्विङ्किरामिमः ॥ Bhā. P. V. 7. 14. This verse explains the four-footed Gāyatrī. Following is Śrīdhara's commentary on the verse which shows the close relation of this verse to the Gāyatrī. सवितुः देवस्य सूर्यस्य, भर्गः स्वरूपभूतं तेजः, जातं वेदः धनं कर्मफलं यस्मात् तत् कर्मफलदम् इत्यर्थः । अत्र हेतुः भर्गः यत्मनसा एव इदं विश्वं जजान ससर्ज, पुनश्च अदः सृष्टं विश्वम् अन्तर्यामिरूपेण प्रविश्य गृध्राणं आकाङ्क्षन्तं हंसं जीवं स्वरेतसा चिच्छक्त्या चष्टे पश्यति पालयतीत्यर्थः । नृषु सीदति उपाधितया तिष्ठति इति नृषद्बुद्धिः तस्याः रिङ्गि गतिं राति ददाति इति नृषद्विङ्किराम् (भर्गः) इमः गच्छामः शरणं व्रजामः ॥

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CHAPTER V

The Origin and development of the conception of bhakti with special reference to the Bhāgavata cult.

The stress on bhakti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa leads one naturally to the study of the conception of bhakti. The word bhakti is derived from the root bhaj which means to serve or adore. It occurs in Vedic passages like RV. I. 156. 3. Upa+ As (उप+ √अस्) was also used in the Saṁhitās in the sense of worship. [1] The words Upāsana and bhakti are thus more or less synonymous. Bhakti stands for faith in a personal God, love for Him, dedication of everything to His service and the attainment of mukti by personal devotion. "Bhakti is an attachment through emotion, distinct from Knowledge and Action, and when it becomes instinct with religious feeling binding man and God, it leads to the perception of the divine." Śāṇdilya defines bhakti as deep attachment to God. [2] Nārada goes further and says that besides deep attachment bhakti denotes dedication of all one's actions to God and also a feeling of deep anguish in forgetting Him. [3]

Bhakti in the Ṛgveda

These essential elements of bhakti are found in the Varuṇa Sūkta of the Ṛgveda. Varuṇa was supposed to be harsh to the guilty and gracious to the penitent when he came praying. [4] This marks the beginning of the 'doctrine of trust' in divine forgiveness to a worshipper which in later ages developed into bhakti." The doctrine of divine grace is also found in the Vāk Sūkta of the Ṛgveda. Here the goddess of speech, Vāc, is said to choose him whom she loves and to make him mighty.

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1. यस्य विश्व उपासते । YV. 25. 13.
2. सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे । Śāndilyasūtra.
3. सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा । Nārada BS. 2.
   तदर्पिताखिलाचारता तद्विस्मरणे परमव्याकुलता । Ibid. 19.
4. RV. VII. 86. 4.

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In the mantras of the Vedas we find epithets like 'father,' 'friend,' prefixed to the names of gods which indicate that a certain intimacy of relation was felt by the worshipper between himself and the deity." In VIII. I. 6; VIII. 98. 11 of the Ṛgveda, Indra is invoked as 'father and mother' and Ṛgveda III. 53. 2 echoes the feelings of a son towards his father. The friendship between the deity and the devotee is often mentioned and in one place [1] this friendship is spoken of as sweet. Indra is addressed as a brother in Ṛgveda IV. 23. 6; IV. 25.2. These terms of endearment are not restricted to Indra alone. Ṛgveda I. 89. 10 has 'Aditi is father, mother and son.' In Ṛgveda I. 31. 10; II. 1. 9; VI. 1.5; VI. 2. 7; III. 3. 4; Agni is invoked as father, brother, son and even mother of men. There are innumerable examples of this kind in the Vedas.

It is interesting to note that Hopkins believes in the existence not only of bhakti in Ṛgvedic times, but also in the existence of bhakti together with its eroticism. He says in his 'Ethics of India' that "an expression of erotic mysticism is not lacking in some of these intimate and familiar hymns where the god-seeker and god-lover dwells upon his spiritual experience with a somewhat sensuous delight, which is only toned down by the consciousness that his relation with his god is rather one of family relationship." Ṛgveda X. 43. 1f is addressed to Indra and runs as follows—"All the desires of my mind seeking happiness unite in extolling thee. As wives embrace their own husbands, even so they embrace the faultless and generous Indra for support, etc." In Ṛgveda X.40.2 the Aśvins are questioned as to their whereabouts at night. "Who draws you to his house like a widow does her husband's brother to the couch, or a woman does a man ?" The language of these hymns does tend towards emotional love and does not denote mere devout meditation.

Development of religious ideas

The Ṛgvedic poets were deeply affected by the apparently mysterious working of the forces of nature and their hymns

1. RV. IV. 68. 11.

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reflect in places "that primitive attitude of mind which looks upon all nature as a living presence or an aggregate of animated personalities." There is a simplicity in the Ṛgvedic religion which completely disappears in the next age i.e. the age of the Brāhmaṇas. In the Brāhmaṇas ritualism was glorified as the only thing that mattered. Everything was subordinated to ritual and the meticulous performance of sacrifices was thought to be efficacious. There was nothing beyond it and the Supreme Being came to be identified with it. [1] In the Brāhmaṇas there is not much evidence of the existence of any conception akin to bhakti.

As we approach the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads a continuation and development of the Vedic ideas are manifest. The excess of ritualism in the Brāhmaṇas brought about a reaction and destroyed its extravagant ritualism. This reaction may be due to "speculative activity outside the circle of priests" or what is more probable they were the result of a reaction among the priests themselves against the elaborate sacrificial rites. These reactions are expressed both allegorically and literally in the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. In the Muṇḍakopaniṣad [2] the sacrificial ceremony is condemned and it is said "that whosoever hopes for real good to accrue from these rites is a fool and is sure to be overtaken again and again by death and decrepitude." In the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad[3] the aśvamedha yajña is explained allegorically as "meditative

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1. यज्ञो वै ब्रह्म ।
2. प्लवा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युंते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ॥
Mund. Up. I. 2. 7.
3. सोऽकामयत, मेध्यं म इदं स्यात्, आत्मन्व्यनेन स्यामिति । ततोऽश्वः समभवत् यदश्वत्; तन्मे ध्यमभूदिति, तदेवाश्वमेधस्याश्वमेधत्वम् । एष ह वा अश्वमेधं वेद य एनमेवं वेद । तमनवरुध्यैवामन्यत । तं संवत्सरस्य परस्तादात्मन आलभत । पशून्देवताभ्यः प्रत्यौहत । तस्मात्सर्वदेवत्यं प्रोक्षितं प्राजापत्यमालभन्ते । एष ह वा अश्वमेधो य एष तपति तस्य संवत्सर आत्मा; अयमग्निरर्कः तस्येमे लोका आत्मनः । तावेतावर्काश्वमेधौ । सो पुनर्मृत्युं जयति नैनं मृत्युराप्नोति मृत्युरस्यात्मा भवति, एतासां देवतानामेको भवति ॥ Br. Up. I. 2. 7.

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act in which the contemplative is to offer up the whole universe in place of the horse and by thus renouncing everything attain to true autonomy."

Development of bhakti in the Vedic period (i.e., upto the Upaniṣadic age)

Bhakti is a direct development of the Upāsana or fervent meditation of the Upaniṣads. Upāsana on a number of things like manas, the sun, the Puruṣa in the sun or the moon regarded as Brahman is an usual injunction in the Upaniṣads.[1] The fact that all the later systems of Indian philosophy deduce their doctrines from the Upaniṣads proves that the Upaniṣads do not preach any one dogmatic doctrine. The only consistency they display is in the doctrine of One Reality usually denoted as Brahman. In general the teaching of the Upaniṣads may be described as 'monistic and idealistic.' There is only One Reality and it is the same as the individual self or Ātman. The individual souls are regarded as forms of the Supreme and are related to the Supreme as sparks of fire to the fire, or as earthen jars to the earth of which they are made. Every individual is exhorted to work for realization of the Highest Truth without which life is a mere waste. The apparent diversity between Brahman and Ātman is explained as due to ignorance and once Māyā in the form of ignorance is dispelled, the Ātman realizes its essential oneness with the Paramātman.

Vedic gods like Indra and Varuṇa were personal but they gradually lost that character in the days of the Upaniṣads and became mere phases of the Impersonal Brahman. We cannot exactly look for any theistic view in the Upaniṣads whose primary concern is with the philosophic Absolute "except where that Absolute itself is personified and spoken of as

1. अयमादित्यः सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु, अस्यादित्यस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि मधु, यश्चायमस्मिन्नादित्ये तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः, यश्चायमध्यात्मं चाक्षुषस्तेजोमयोऽमृतमयः पुरुषः, अयमेव स योऽयमात्मा, इदममृतम्, इदं ब्रह्म इदं सर्वम् ॥ Br. Up. II. 5. 5.

मनोमयः प्राणशरीरो भारूपः सत्यसंकल्प आकाशात्मा सर्वकर्मा सर्वकामः सर्वगन्धः सर्वरसः सर्वमिदमभ्यात्तोऽवाक्यनादरः ॥ Chānd. Up. III. 14. 2.

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God." Such a theistic description is sometimes found. But since the Supreme God was identified with the Jīva in the Upaniṣads it was difficult to exalt Him and worship Him in a theistic sense. As Hiriyanna puts it "He can stand only for an inner principle and not for an object of adoration distinct from him that adores." Thus Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad [1] and Kenopaniṣad [2] say "whoever worships a deity thinking that to be one and himself another—he does not know." But the goal set by the Upaniṣads, of self-realization, is not an easy one for all. It is not only "a metaphysical fact but involves an ethical and mystical process." It is not possible to achieve this by sheer intellectual effort; but it includes an intuitional experience. In fact the Upaniṣads do contain outbursts of spiritual experience, though few, which reflect the spirit of bhakti. Chāndogyopaniṣad VIII. 13. 1 [3] and Taittirīyopaniṣad III. 10. 5-6 [4] are examples of this kind of utterence. Traces of erotic mysticism are not lacking in the Upaniṣads as well where in one place "the bliss of realization is likened to the bliss arising from the union with a beloved wife." [5]

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1. अथ योऽन्यां देवतामुपास्ते अन्योऽसावन्योऽहमस्मीति न स वेद etc. Br. Up. I. 4. 10.

2. यद्वाचानभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते । तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् । तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ etc. Kena. Up. I. 4 ff.

3. इयामाच्छबलं प्रपद्ये शबलाच्छयामं प्रपद्येऽध्व इव रोमाणि विधूय पापं चन्द्र इव राहोर्मुखात्प्रमुच्य धूत्वा शरीरमकृतं कृतात्मा ब्रह्मलोकमभिसंभवामीत्यभिसंभवामीति Chānd. Up. VIII. 13. 1.

4. स य एवंवित् ॥ अस्माल्लोकात्प्रेत्य ॥ एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य ॥ एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य ॥ एतं मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य ॥ इमाँल्लोकान्कामान्नी कामरूप्यनुसंचरन् ॥ एतत्साम गायन्नास्ते ॥ हा ३ वु हा ३ वु हा ३ वु ॥ अहमन्नमहमन्नमहमन्नम् ॥ अहमन्नादो ३ हमन्नादो ३ हमन्नादः ॥ अहं श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृत् ॥ अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋता ३ स्य ॥ पूर्वं देवेभ्योऽमृतस्य ना ३ भायि ॥ यो मा ददाति स इदेव मा ३ वाः ॥ अहमन्नमन्नमदन्तमा ३ द्मि ॥ अहं विश्वं भुवनमभ्यभवा ३ म् ॥ सुवर्ण्ज्योतीः ॥ य एवं वेद ॥ इत्युपनिषत् । Taitt. Up. III. 5-6.

5. तद्वा अस्यैतदतिच्छन्दा अपहतपाप्माभयं रूपम् । तद्यथा प्रियया स्त्रिया संपरिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किंचन वेद नान्तरम्, एवमेवायं पुरुषः प्राज्ञेनात्मना संपरिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किंचन वेद नान्तरम्; तद्वा अस्यैतदाप्तकाममात्मकाममकामं रूपं शोकान्तरम् ॥ Br. Up. IV. 3. 21.

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The cosmology of the Upaniṣads suggests the idea of a personal creator. In such theories Brahman is very often individualized "and endowed with properties and capacities." The universe and the individual are also given a realistic touch. In the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad [1] the Ātman as Antaryāmin is described as supporting the sun and moon, heaven and earth, or as expanding into the whole universe which results at his command. Radhakrishnan in his Indian Philosophy has termed Yājñavalkya's idealism as spiritualised bhakti for the Absolute is "personified or conceived as a deity (devatā) who is the creator (viśvakṛt) and the protector, (bhūtapāla) the lord of all, the Supreme person."[2]

During the period of the later Upaniṣads, though the identity of the universal and individual souls are not refuted, still the individual Ātman is gradually distinguished from the Supreme Being. The two most important Upaniṣads in this connection are the Kaṭhopaniṣad and the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad. Talking about self-realization the Kaṭhopaniṣad says that "this can be attained not by intellect but by a kind of subtle and piercing Buddhi or intuition," [3] coupled with yogic practices and instructed by the spiritual teacher. [4] In I. 2. 23 [5] there seems to be a suggestion of the doctrine of grace and predestination. This same verse is used in a theistic sense in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad III. 2. 3. So also Kaṭhopaniṣad I. 2. 20 and Śvetāśvataropaniṣad III. 20 are the same and convey a theistic meaning. [6] "Subtler than even the

1. Br. Up. III. 7. 3 ff.
2. Br. Up. IV. 4. 22.
3. एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥ Kaṭha. Up. I. 3. 12.
4. न नरेणावरेण प्रोक्त एष सुविज्ञेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः ।
अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अणीयान्ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात् ॥
नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ।
यां त्वमापः सत्यधृतिर्बतासि त्वादृङ्नोभूयान्नचिकेतः प्रष्टा ॥ Kaṭha.Up.I.2.8-9.
5. नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूँ स्वाम् ॥ Ibid. I. 2. 23.
6. अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयानात्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम् ।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥
Kaṭha. Up. I. 2. 20 and Śvet. Up. III. 20.

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subtlest and greater than the greatest the Ātman is concealed in the heart of the creature. By the grace of the creator, one becomes free from sorrows and desires, and then realizes Him as the great Lord."

The tendency to distinguish between the individual and Supreme Selfs gradually develops and in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad it is set out in all clearness. In III. 1. 1–3 [1] it echoes the Ṛgvedic analogy [2] of two birds dwelling in one tree, one eating the sweet fruit while the other merely gazed at it. The same verse is repeated in the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad. [3] It is in this latter Upaniṣad that the whole conception of theism is explicit—'belief in God, soul and the world and the conviction that devotion to the Lord is the true means of salvation." [4]

Bhakti in the post-vedic age

We now come to the post-vedic period i.e. the period when the various systems of Indian philosophy were in the making and also the period which gave birth to Buddhism and Jainism.

By the time of the Buddha (6th century B. C.) the conception of a personal God was established and it was Brahmā who was raised to that rank first. In the earlier portions of the Mahābhārata also we find Brahmā extolled as the highest God. But there still seems to be a confusion between the Prajāpati of the Brāhmaṇas and the later Brahmā whose conception is derived from Brahman of the Upaniṣads. Both Prajāpati and Brahmā are frequently identified. That Brahmā occupied the highest place in Buddha's time is also clear from Pāli literature. The next stage is the exaltation of both Śiva

1. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ Mund. Up. III. 1.1.
2. Quoted earlier in chapter IV.
3. Śvet. Up. IV. 6.
4. यो देवानां प्रभवश्चोद्भवश्च विश्वाधिपो रुद्रो महर्षिः ।
हिरण्यगर्भं जनयामास पूर्वं स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥
यामिषुं गिरिशन्त हस्ते बिभर्ष्यस्तवे ।
शिवां गिरित्र तां कुरु मा हिंसीः पुरुषं जगत् ॥ Śvet. Up. III. 4 and 6.

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and Viṣṇu alternately to the rank of the Highest God. By the time of the Greek invasion both Śiva and Viṣṇu had been raised to a level with Brahmā and the three gods constitute the famous Hindu Trinity. As Macdonell remarks : "We gather from the account of Megasthenes that about 300 B. C. these two gods (Śiva and Viṣṇu) were already prominent and the people were divided into Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites." [1] Parallel with this development was that of Nārāyaṇa. 'Nārāyaṇa' means 'descendant of Nara or the primeval male' i.e., Puruṣa who is the origin of the whole universe according to the Puruṣa Sūkta. In some passages of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa [2] he appears to be Supreme; but later he is identified with Viṣṇu thus 'giving rise to the conception of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa parallel to that of Rudra-Śiva. [3]

Side by side with the later Upaniṣads rose the schools of Buddhism and Jainism mainly as a protest against the ritualistic rigour of the Brāhmaṇas. The Buddhists denied the efficacy of sacrificial acts as well as the authority of the Vedas. Nirvāṇa or eternal happiness was to be obtained through moral discipline, 'by restraining the passions and purifying and ennobling the thoughts.'

Both the Upaniṣads which laid stress on knowledge and Buddhism which laid stress on strict moral purity failed to catch the layman, for it is one thing to talk about curbing the passions, purifying the heart, and another thing to practise them. Buddhism denied the existence of God and thus man lost a friend and guide. The theistic Upaniṣads also laid too much stress on the "unassisted efforts of man." It was as a cumulative effect of all this that Bhakti came to stay and by the time of the Bhagavad Gītā established itself as one of the surest means to emancipation. It was the desire of the devotee for a personal god whom he can look forward to for help and succour that gave rise to theism, and its corollary the Bhakti cult. The Gītā derives its theism from

1. Macdonell 'A History of Sanskrit Literature' p. 286.
2. Śat. Brāh. XIII. 6. 1. 1.
3. Hiriyanna 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy' p. 99.

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the Upaniṣads, equally with them it enjoins moral purity and the contemplation of God, but in addition, it teaches man to love God and not himself, to live for Him and not for himself and to place unlimited faith in Him. The Gītā's unique contribution lies in the thought that the Supreme Being of the Upaniṣads, the all-pervading, unknowable One, had assumed the form of Arjuna's charioteer. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā is deified and by that time came to be worshipped as the Supreme. But it is in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata that the identification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa becomes complete and bhakti centering round Viṣṇu is fully established. The Nārāyaṇīya is one of the authorities for the Bhāgavata creed which believes in a single personal God Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) and "in salvation as resulting from an unswerving devotion to him."

Viṣṇu's supremacy

It is now worthwhile to consider how Viṣṇu came to occupy this exalted position in later times. Śiva also has his own bhaktas but it is with Viṣṇu that the word bhakti has come to be associated more often and Vaiṣṇavism now stands for that form of religion 'which by the practice of bhakti and faith, worships Viṣṇu', recognising Him to be the Supreme and believes that by such practices they will be relieved from the bonds of rebirth.

Viṣṇu's position in the Ṛgveda can be described as not unimportant. He is well known for the long strides [1] and his three steps by which he measured the universe is the basis for the Vāmanāvatāra. Two of these steps or spaces can be seen by men but the third or highest step is beyond the flight of birds or mortal ken. Viṣṇu in the Ṛgveda was also entrusted with "the work of the deliverence of man from distress." [2] Viṣṇu is very often found associated with Indra in the Ṛgvedic hymns. Thus in Ṛgveda VIII. 12. 27 "the power by which Viṣṇu takes his three strides is described as being derived from

1. RV. I. 154. 3.
2. Ibid. VI. 49. 13.

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Indra." Ṛgveda VIII. 15. 9 and X. 113. 2 represent Viṣṇu as glorifying Indra. If we rank the Ṛgvedic deities according to tne number of hymns addressed to each then certainly Viṣṇu occupied only a subordinate place in the estimation and affection of the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣis, being invoked in only five or six hymns. But such a ranking is unfortunately not useful for even such a prominent deity like Varuṇa is celebrated alone (apart from Mitra) in hardly a dozen hymns. All we can say is that Viṣṇu did not hold a higher place than deities like Indra or Varuṇa or others; but he certainly stood on a par with the other deities.

In Yāska's Nirukta we have certain views expressed on the character of Viṣṇu. Śākapūṇi considers him as a god "who in his three strides is manifested in a threefold form—as Agni on earth, as Indra or Vāyu in the atmosphere and as the sun in heaven." But Aurṇavābha like Macdonell interprets Viṣṇu's strides as the rising, culmination and setting of the sun. Macdonell derives the word Viṣṇu from the root √Viṣ, to be active, thus meaning "the active one." In the Ṛgveda I. 15. 5 and I. 164 Viṣṇu is described "as setting in motion like a revolving wheel his ninety steeds with their four manes." This clearly stands for the solar year of 360 days. "Viṣṇu seems to have been originally a personification of the activity of the sun." Consistent with this Macdonell describes the three steps of Viṣṇu as the course of the sun through the three regions—earth, air and heaven. Macdonell points out the association of Viṣṇu with the sun in other texts as well. Thus in the Brāhmaṇas Viṣṇu's head when cut off becomes the sun.[1] Once when Viṣṇu was resting his head on the end of his bow some ants saw him and said "How should we be rewarded, if we could gnaw the strings of the bow ?" Then the gods said that they would be rewarded with food. The ants gnawed away the strings and when the ends of the bow sprang apart Viṣṇu's head was also wrenched away, and it became the sun. Dr. Das Gupta finds in this legend a reference to the later story of Kṛṣṇa's being shot with an

1. Muir 'Original Sanskrit Texts' Vol. IV. p. 124-5.

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arrow by an archer. The wheel of Viṣṇu in post-vedic literature resembles the sun. Moreover his vechicle Garuḍa is called both Garutmat and Suparṇa, both terms already occurring in the Ṛgveda as names of the sun-bird. Kuhn associates the Kaustubha of Viṣṇu in post-vedic literature with the sun. Oldenberg, on the other hand, considers Viṣṇu only as a traverser of wide space.

During the Brāhmaṇa period Viṣṇu started to rise in importance. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa [1] Agni is described as the lowest and Viṣṇu as the highest of the gods. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XIV. 1. 1 has a story which suggests that Viṣṇu had reached the highest position by that time. A sacrifice was held by the gods for obtaining splendour, glory and food. The condition was that the first to reach the end of the sacrifice was to attain the highest place. Among them Viṣṇu was the first and thus he became the highest of the gods.

The Upaniṣadic period saw a further rise in Viṣṇu's position. In the Maitrī Upaniṣad [2] "food is called the form of Bhagavad Viṣṇu, which sustains the universe." In the Kaṭhopaniṣad [3] the destination of the human soul in its long journey is called the highest place of Viṣṇu. By the time of the epics and the Purāṇas the Vaiṣṇava cult had already been established which proclaimed Viṣṇu as the only God.

The origin and early history of Vaiṣṇavism are hard to trace. Modern Vaiṣṇavism comprises three streams of thought "One flowing from Viṣṇu the Vedic god, another from Nārāyaṇa the cosmic and philosophic god and the third from Vāsudeva, the historical god." Thus in Vaiṣṇavism Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) all denote the Supreme Deity.

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1. अग्निर्वै देवानां अवमः विष्णुः परमः तदन्तरेण सर्वाः देवताः ॥
Aita. Brāh. I. 1.

2. अथान्यत्राप्युक्तं विश्वभृद्वै नामैषा तनूर्भगवतो विष्णोर्यदिदमन्नम् ।
प्राणो वा अन्नस्य रसो मनः प्राणस्य विज्ञानं मनस आनन्दो विज्ञानस्येत्यन्नवान् ।
etc. Maitrī. Up. VI. 13.

3. विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनः प्रग्रहवान् नरः ।
सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद् विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥ Kaṭha. Up, I. 3. 9.

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Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his teachings

Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Mahābhārata fame belonged to the Sātvata tribe and he preached certain doctrines which are embodied in the Bhagavad Gītā. Vasudeva was his father, Devakī his mother and Ghora Āṅgirasa was his religious instructor. Ghora Āṅgirasa worshipped a deity manifested in the form of the sun, (probably identified with Viṣṇu). He taught Śrī Kṛṣṇa that virtues like austerity, almsgiving, uprightness, harmlessness and truthfulness are as effective as dakṣiṇā to the priests; that one's last thoughts before leaving this mortal coil should be on the Supreme Being; and that "one's whole life must be regarded as a continual sacrifice." Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the Gītā, teaches very similar doctrines. Thus in IX. 27 [1] it is said that all actions should be dedicated as sacrifice to the Deity; in XVI. 1–3[2] again virtues like austerity, almsgiving etc. are mentioned; and in VIII. 5–10[3] the importance of last thoughts is pointed out. But one should not make much of these similarities. The teachings of Ghora Āṅgirasa are Upaniṣadic and the Gītā is well known as an echoer of some of the teachings of the Upaniṣads. Moreover the symbolising of the Vedic ritual is quite common in the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads and need not be exclusively Ghora Āṅgirasa's teaching. So also the other teachings in the Gītā are probably borrowed from the general Brāhmaṇic and Upaniṣadic literature.

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1. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
   यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ।। Gītā. IX. 27.
2. अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
   दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ।।
   अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
   दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ।।
   तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
   भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ।। Ibid. XVI. 1–3.
3. अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
   यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ।।
   यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
   तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ।। Ibid. VIII. 5–6.

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To understand the doctrines preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā we should know the religious conditions prevailing at that time. The Gītā cannot be dated later than 200 B. C. The Gītā is familiar with the yoga philosophy and on that basis it is sometimes argued that it should be later than the second century B. C. (Patañjali's date). But it will be useful to remember here that the Gītā refers to Yoga as a system which has been lost. If it were later than Patañjali this remark would be meaningless. Hence the Gītā must have probably existed before Patañjali wrote his Yogasūtras. As such it developed in the period of the later Upaniṣads and was contemporaneous with heretical systems like Buddhism and Jainism. There were the karmakāṇḍins who believed in yajñas as the sole means of emancipation and there were the Aupaniṣadas who instructed men to give up all worldly actions and resort to knowledge as the only goal. The impact of Buddhism and Jainism was forcing the ethical aspect of religion to the front. All these diverse ways were confusing to the common man and Kṛṣṇa rose to the occasion supplying the need of the day. In course of time Kṛṣṇa himself became deified and was identified with Viṣṇu, and the name for the Deity is Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and other Bhāgavata literature.

Reference to Vāsudeva worship

The earliest reference to the worship of Vāsudeva is found in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī IV. 3. 98. [1] Here it is said that the termination 'vun' (aka) is added to Vāsudeva and Arjuna to form nouns denoting worshipper, devotee, or adorer of these persons. The next sūtra teaches the formation of such nouns from names of kṣatriyas. [2] Hence the question arises of the necessity of the previous rule. This is argued by Patañjali in his Mahābhāṣya—"One reason may be that the word is put in here in order to indicate that in speaking of Vāsudeva and Arjuna together, the name of Vāsudeva should always be used first. Or this word Vāsudeva is the name of the

1. वासुदेवार्जुनाभ्यां वुन् ॥
2. गोत्रक्षत्रियाख्येभ्यो बहुलं वुञ् ॥ Aṣṭādhyāyī. IV. 3. 99,

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divine being and not of a kṣatriya; i.e. Vāsudeva is to be taken here in his capacity as a god and not in his capacity as a mere kṣatriya; for in this latter capacity the name comes under the other rule." [1]

Pāṇini's reference to Vāsudeva and bhakti only proves the antiquity of this cult. Patañjali (150 B. C.) has many more references to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his Mahābhāṣya. The stories of Kaṃsa's death at the hands of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the subjugation of Bali were already in Patañjali's days considered to have happened in remote times. These stories were popular and Patañjali refers to them very often. "Under a Vārtika on Pāṇini II. 3. 36 Patañjali says that Kṛṣṇa was not well disposed or friendly to his uncle." (Asādhurmātule Kṛṣṇaḥ). Commenting on Bahuvrīhi compounds in Pāṇini II. 2. 23 the Mahābhāṣya has—Saṅkarṣaṇa-dvitīyasya balam Kṛṣṇasya vardhatām. As illustrations for different sūtras Patañjali uses expressions like Akrūravargya; Akrūravargīṇa; Vāsudevavargya, Vāsudevavargīṇa. As is well known Akrūra plays a prominent part in Kṛṣṇa's story. Under Sūtra VI. 3. 5 (6) Patañjali has—Janārdanastvātmacaturtha eva. i.e. Janārdana whose self is the fourth in a constituent group. This shows the popularity of the Vyūha doctrine in Patañjali's time. The existence of temples to Keśava and Rāma are referred to by him in Bhāṣya I. 436. Prāsādedhanapati Rāmakeśavānām. All these prove that not only Vaiṣṇavism generally but that peculiar form of Vaiṣṇavism called the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra cult goes back to a great antiquity. Grierson believed that the Bhāgavata creed goes back anterior to Pāṇini on the basis of his knowledge of Vāsudeva as a divine being.[2] Another point lending belief to the antiquity of the Bhāgavata cult is the reference to Śiva-Bhāgavatas in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya II. 387. Bhagavat is a name peculiar to Viṣṇu and his devotees, the Bhāgavatas, believed in bhakti as more efficacious than ritual or sacrifice for obtaining mukti. There were

1. ..... इदं तर्हि प्रयोजनं वासुदेवशब्दस्य पूर्वनिपातं वक्ष्यामीति ।
अथवा नैष क्षत्रियाख्या संज्ञैषा तत्रभगवतः ॥ Mahābhāṣya.

2. JRAS. 1909. p. 1122.

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Śaivas as well who believed in bhakti towards Śiva and they borrowed this word bhāgavata adding Śiva to it to denote the bhaktas of Śiva. Thus the Śiva bhaktas were called Śiva-bhāgavatas and Patañjali refers to them in his Mahābhāṣya commenting on V. 2. 76.[1] This not only proves that there were Śiva-bhāgavatas in Patañjali's time but also that they were later than the genuine bhāgavatas. The necessity for adding a distinguishing appellation Śiva to Bhāgavata proves that. Moreover the bhāgavatas as a group of Vaiṣṇava bhaktas must have become so well known in the second century B. C. or earlier as to induce the Śaiva bhaktas to adopt it for themselves.

That the worship of Vāsudeva was already in vogue about the fourth century B. C. is proved by Magasthenes. He mentions Heracles as the god of the Saurasenoi "in whose country was situated Methora or Mathurā and the River Jobares or Jamnā flowed." Saurasenoi stands for Śaurasenas i.e. the Sātvatas here and Vāsudeva corresponds to Heracles. Hari plus Kṛṣṇa probably got transformed into Heracles.

Inscriptional evidence

The existence of inscriptions of varying periods also proves the antiquity of the Bhakti cult. First of all we come across the Ghoṣundi inscription in Rājasthan which from the characters in which it is engraved scholars assign to about the second century before Christ. It speaks of the construction of a stone wall (śilaprākāra) round the hall of the worship of Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva.[2] The mention of Vāsudeva

1. 'अयःशूलदण्डाजिनाभ्यां ठक्ठञौ'
किं योऽयःशूलेनान्विच्छति स आयःशूलिकः ?
किं चातः
शिवभागवते प्राप्नोति ।
एवं तह्युत्तरपदलोपोऽत्र द्रष्टव्यः । अयः शूलमिवायःशूलम् । यो मृदुनोपायेनान्वेष्टव्यानर्थान्त्रभसेनान्विच्छति स उच्यत आयः शूलिकः ॥ Mahābhāṣya.

2. *Ghosundi Inscription*
This contains three lines of fifteen letters each in a kind of Prakrit or Pāli.
न ग ज य ने न पा र श र ?, त ण स ज ना भ ग व भ्या स क ष ण वा सु दे वा भ्यां भ्यां पू ज श ला प्रा का रो ना रा य ना व ट का ।

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and Saṁkarṣaṇa together could only indicate the prevalence of the Bhāgavata cult. Another inscription which also belongs to the early part of the second century B. C. is the Besnagar inscription. According to this inscription Heliodora, a resident of Takṣaśilā and ambassador of Aṃtalikita created a flagstaff with an image of Garuḍa at the top in honour of Vāsudeva. In this inscription Heliodora describes himself as a Bhāgavata. [1] Heliodora was a Greek and incidentally this proves that even foreigners were admitted into the Bhāgavata fold. Another significance of this inscription is the association of Garuḍa, a bird sacred to Viṣṇu, with Vāsudeva. The inscription exalts the three steps of Viṣṇu as—"three immortal steps—when practised lead to heaven—self-control, charity and diligence." This proves that by about 200 B. C. Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa was identified with Viṣṇu. Yet another inscription at Nānāghat cave dated at about the beginning of the first century B. C. mentions the names Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva in a Dvandva compound. The various Vaiṣṇava inscriptions have been given in detail in the next chapter.

Identification of Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa

The process by which the three deities Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa came to be identified is rather interesting.

Viṣṇu by the time of the Brāhmaṇas was an important God, in fact the highest, and the worshippers of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa thought Viṣṇu to be the same as their god. Viṣṇu's qualities which resembled in a way that of Vāsudeva helped

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1. *Translation of the Besnagar Inscription*

"This Garuḍadhvaja of the god of gods, Vāsudeva, has been made at the instance of Heliodoros. a Bhāgavata, the son of Dion, from Taxila, who having constrained his senses (and) arrived (here) in the company of Chamdadāsa, the king of the family of Bhāgabhadra, the Saviour, the son of a lady belonging to the Kautsa gotra of (ever) increasing (glory) the vassal king of the Mahārāja Antialkidas pledges himself to the three (cardinal virtues) the observance of which leads to immortality viz. self-restrait, liberality and modesty."

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in this identification. Just as Vāsudeva was a helper to the man in distress so also Viṣṇu in the Ṛgveda is a friend and helper of Indra.[1] Ṛgveda VI. 49. 13 describes Viṣṇu as traversing the earth in order to relieve mankind. The Mahābhārata abounds in stories of Viṣṇu's generosity and also his various incarnations to help mankind. In the Bhagavad Gītā, one of the sacred books of the Bhāgavatas, Vāsudeva is described as descending to the earth many times as various avatāras. The identification of two deities like Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva with very nearly similar qualities becomes thus easy. In the Bhagavad Gītā [2] Śrī Kṛṣṇa calls himself the principle of sacrifice and in the Brāhmaṇas Viṣṇu is identified with the sacrifice. [3]

Nārāyaṇa coupled with Nara is described in quite a few places in the Mahābhārata as a sage. [4] Traditionally the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Ṛgveda is attributed to a sage called Nārāyaṇa. The word Nārāyaṇa means 'descendant of Nara or the primeval male' i.e. Puruṣa, and according to the Puruṣa Sūkta, the entire universe springs from Puruṣa. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa [5] 'Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa is said to have sacrificed himself and become the whole world." This seems to suggest that by this time sage Nārāyaṇa had become deified and identified with the universal Puruṣa, from whose body the universe sprang. The universal Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa was deeply attached

1. RV. I. 85. 7.
2. अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ Gītā. VIII. 4.
3. Śata. Brāh. I. 2. 5. 1 ff. Muir 'Origlnal Sanskrit Texts' Vol. IV. p. 122.
4. नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पुराणावृषिसत्तमौ ।
ताविमावनुजानीहि हृषीकेशधनञ्जयौ ॥ MBH. III. 47. 10.
नरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष हरिर्नारायणो ह्यहम् ।
काले लोकमिमं प्राप्तौ नरनारायणावृषी ॥ Ibid. III. 12. 46.
स्वलपेनैव तु कालेन शत्रून् जेष्यसि पाण्डव ।
नरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष नारायणसहायवान् ॥ Ibid. VI. 24. 18.
5. पुरुषं ह नारायणम्प्रजापतिरुवाच । यजस्व यजस्वेति । स होवाच यजस्व यजस्वेति वाव त्वम्मामात्थ etc. Śata. Brāh. XII. 3. 4.

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to Nara which struck a parallel note with the friendship of Vāsudeva for Arjuna. Thus in the Mahābhārata it is often said that "the universal spirit Nārāyaṇa is the same as the Supreme Being Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and his comrade Nara is the same as Arjuna."

When Vāsudeva became identified with Nārāyaṇa the peculiarities of the Nārāyaṇa cult influenced the further development of the Vāsudeva or Pāñcarātra cult. Thus, according to Schrader, the very name Pāñcarātra is from the Pañcarātra Sattra of Nārāyaṇa "interpreted philosophically as the five-fold self-manifestation of God by means of His Para, Vyūha, Vibhava, Antaryāmin and Arcā forms." [1] It is also interesting to note that the earliest usage of the word pañcarātra is found in this sattra. Moreover the Puruṣa Sūkta together with the Sahasraśīrṣa portion of the Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad "plays an important part in the cosmological accounts and Mantra exegesis of the Pāñcarātrins."

Concerning the date of the identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu there is an important passage in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka [2] where hymns are addressed to Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva as three aspects of one God. This passage can hardly be later than the third century B. C. hence the identification also goes back to that period or earlier.

Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva and Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa

Another interesting question here is whether Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva and Gopāla Kṛṣṇa originally denoted the same God as at present, or whether they came to do so later on. Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar in his 'Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other minor religions' argues that the Gopāla aspect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa came in later, about the beginning of the Christian era, when Vaiṣṇavism came into contact with the Ābhiras, a pastoral tribe who

1. Schrader 'Introduction to the Pāñcharātra and Ahirbudhnya Samhitā' p. 25.
2. नारायणाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो विष्णुः प्रचोदयात् ॥ Taitt. Āraṇ. X. 1. 6.

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worshipped a cowherd deity. Stories connected with this deity influenced the later development of Vaiṣṇavism and expresses itself in the Purāṇic literature—especially the Harivaṃśa, Vāyu, Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas. The word Govinda as such appears in the Gītā as well as in other places of the Mahābhārata. But in these places it does not have much connection with cows. In the Ādiparva the etymological explanation of Govinda is given as "Govinda is so called because in the form of a boar He found the earth (go) in the waters which he agitated." Bhandarkar traces Govinda back to the Ṛgvedic Govid which is an epithet for Indra meaning 'the finder of the cows.' Thus the association of Vāsudeva or Kṛṣṇa with cows need not be a foreign element. When Vāsudeva rose in prominence the characterstics of the different deities like Indra just came to be transferred to him (Vāsudeva). Moreover it should be borne in mind that Viṣṇu is closely associated with Indra in the Ṛgveda and so when Vāsudeva came to be identified with Viṣṇu he took on the qualities of Indra as well. Thus Vāsudeva's association with cows was established and epithetes like Gopāla and Gopālakṛṣṇa gradually came into being as a result of this association.

Dr. Bhandarkar dates the migration of Ābhīras into India about the first century A. D. But there is evidence to show that this migration took place long before Christ was born. This is ably proved by Mr. Ramprasad Chanda in his book called 'The Indo-Āryan Races' pp. 84–85. There is some evidence in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya as well. [1] He says under a vārtika sūtra—"A Dvandva compound should not be formed between a general term (Sāmānya) and a particular term (viśeṣa). Then we cannot have compounds like Śūdrābhīram, Gobalīvardam, etc. for they contradict the above rule. Hence if we want a Dvandva compound in Śūdrābhīram, Śūdra must

1. वार्तिक : "सामान्यविशेषवाचिनोश्च द्वन्द्वाभावात् सिद्धम् ।"
भाष्य : 'सामान्यविशेषवाचिनोश्च द्वन्द्वो न भवतीति वक्तव्यम् । यदि सामान्यविशेषवाचिनोर्द्वन्द्वो न भवतीत्युच्यते शूद्राभीरम् गोवलीवर्दम् तृगोलपमिति न सिध्यति । नैष दोषः । इह तावत् शूद्राभीरमिति आभीरा जात्यन्तराणि ।'

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not be taken as a general term and Ābhīra as a particular term included within that term, though they are actually so. In Śūdrābhīram therefore, the two terms are understood to represent two different classes (Jāti)."

From the above it is easy to conclude that the Ābhīras had not only settled in India but had also come to be associated with the Śūdras by the time of Patañjali i.e. the second century B. C. Hence their migration into India must have taken place about 300 B. C. It is quite possible that some stories of Kṛṣṇa's childhood and youth were influenced by similar stories that existed among the Ābhīras.

The theory held by certain western scholars like Weber and Kennedy that Christ is the fore-runner of Kṛṣṇa and the Bible the original of the Bhagavad Gītā, is absurd to say the least. Scholars like Keith have refuted it and all that has been said above show how old the Bhāgavata cult is, going back to many centuries before the dawn of the Christian era.

The Sātvatas and the Sātvatavidhi

The earliest extant authority on the Bhāgavata cult is the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata. Here the Pāñcarātra system is proclaimed as the religion of the Sātvatas and is also called the Sātvata religion. [1] Vasu Uparicara is here a follower of the Sātvata religion and he is described as worshipping the "Supreme God according to the Sātvata vidhi which was revealed in the beginning by the sun." [2] This

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1. ततः प्रावर्तत तदा आदौ कृतयुगं शुभम् ।
ततो हि सात्वतो धर्मो व्याप्य लोकानवस्थितः ॥ MBH. XII. 348. 34.
एवमेष महान्धर्म आद्यो राजन्सनातनः ।
दुर्विज्ञेयो दुष्करश्च सात्वतैर्धार्यते सदा ॥ Ibid. XII. 348. 55.
एष ते कथितो धर्मः सात्वतः कुरुनन्दन ।
कुरुष्वैनं यथान्यायं यदि शक्तोऽसि भारत ॥ Ibid. XII. 348. 84.

2. सात्वतं विधिमास्थाय प्राक् सूर्यमुखनिःसृतम् ।
पूजयामास देवेशं तच्छेषेण पितामहम् ॥ Ibid. XII. 336. 19.
काम्यनैमित्तिका राजन् यज्ञियाः परमक्रियाः ।
सर्वा सात्वतमास्थाय विधिं चक्रे समाहितः ॥ Ibid. XII. 336. 24.

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religion is said to be the same as the one taught by Bhagavat to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gītā.[1] The Bhagavad Gītā thus is another sacred text of the Bhāgavatas. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, another authority of this cult, represents the Sātvatas as naming the Supreme as Bhagavat and Vāsudeva "and as worshipping and adoring Kṛṣṇa in a peculiar way.[2] Satvat was a descendant of Yadu, according to the Purāṇic genealogy and the race he founded was known as the Sātvata race. The Sātvatas are usually mentioned with the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis who were also Sātvata tribes.[3] In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is stated in connection with the Yādavas that Satvat was the son of Aṃśa and his descendants were called Sātvatas. Vāsudeva belonged to the royal family of the Sātvatas and is many times called Sātvatapuṃgava, Sātvata, Sātyaki etc.[4]

As noted above there was a great intellectual activity in the later Upaniṣadic period or the period which gave rise to Buddhism, Jainism and the different philosophies. It is not improbable that about this time Vāsudeva belonging to the Sātvata tribe founded a theistic system of religion and

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1. समुपोढेष्वनीकेषु कुरुपाण्डवयोर्मृधे ।
अर्जुने विमनस्के च गीता भगवता स्वयम् ॥ MBH. XII. 348. 8.

2. यत् तद् ब्रह्म परं सूक्ष्ममशून्यं शून्यकल्पितम् ।
भगवान् वासुदेवेति यं गृणन्ति हि सात्वताः ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 9. 49.
य एतान् मत्पथो हित्वा भक्तिज्ञानक्रियात्मकान् ।
क्षुद्रान् कामांश्चलैः प्राणैर्जुषन्तः संसरन्ति ते ॥ Ibid. XI. 21. 1.
सम्यगेतद् व्यवसितं भवता सात्वतर्षभ ।
यत् पृच्छसे भागवतान् धर्मांस्त्वं विश्वभावनान् ॥ Ibid. XI. 2. 11.

3. कच्चिदानर्तपुर्यां नः स्वजनाः सुखमासते ।
मधुभोजदाशार्हार्हसात्वतान्धकवृष्णयः ॥ Bhā. P. I. 14. 25.
कच्चित्सुखं सात्वतवृष्णिभोजदाशार्हकाणामधिपः स आस्ते ।
यमभ्यषिञ्चच्छतपत्रनेत्रो नृपासनाशां परिहृत्य दूरात् ॥ Ibid. III. 1. 29.

4. क्रियायोगं समाचक्ष्व भवदाराधनं प्रभो ।
यस्मात्त्वां ये यथार्चन्ति सात्वताः सात्वतर्षभ ॥ Ibid. XI. 27. 1.
तीर्थानां पल्वलानां च पर्वतानां च दर्शनम् ।
आपगानां वनानां च कथयामास सात्त्वते ॥ MBH. I. 218. 12.
ततः सर्वे रथास्तूर्णं पाञ्चाल्या जयगृद्धिनः ।
सात्वताभिसृते द्रोणे धृष्टद्युम्नमवाक्षिपन् ॥ Ibid. Droṇaparva. 97. 36.

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came to be identified with the Truth he taught. Buddhism was preached by Siddhārtha who belonged to the Śākya race and Jainism by Mahāvīra of the Jñātṛka race. Vāsudeva of the Sātvata tribe advocated Bhāgavataism where Bhagavat is the Supreme Truth.

The name Bhagavat for the Supreme in the Bhāgavata cult indicates that the religion goes back to the Vedas, in a limited sense. In the Vedas we come across a deity called Bhaga, who is the bestower of blessing. The word Bhagavat in the sense of blissful and happy is used in Ṛgveda I. 164. 40; VII. 41. 4; X. 60. 12; Atharvaveda II. 10. 2; V. 31. 11 etc. Gradually Bhaga came to denote goodness and in the Mahābhārata and other literature the god possessing goodness came to be known as Bhagavat. The Bhāgavata cult stands for the sect which worships God known as Bhagavat identified with Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva.

In Garbe's "Introduction to the Bhagavad Gītā" he traces four different phases in the growth of the Bhāgavata religion. Initially it had an existence "independent of Brāhmaṇism" consistent with its non-brāhmaṇic origin. The remarkable points in this stage were the founding of a monotheistic religion by Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, its association with the philosophy of Sāṅkhya-Yoga, the deification of the founder of that religion and a deepened religious feeling on the basis of Bhakti. This period continued upto 300 B. C. according to him. The anti-vedic character which came in for an amount of criticism by the commentators of the Vedāntasūtras probably belong to this period.

The second stage is the brāhmanising of the Bhāgavata religion and the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu as the highest God. This period falls between 300 B. C. and the beginning of the Christian era. In Mahābhārata XVIII. 6. 97 the word Vaiṣṇava occurs in the sense of a sect of Viṣṇu worshippers.

The third period which dates upto about the 12th century

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A. D. marks the identification of Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu with Brahman, and the incorporation of Vedānta philosophy side by side with those of Sāṅkhya and Yoga.

The fourth stage comes with Rāmānuja who in the earlier half of the 12th century A. D. systematised the Bhāgavata religion.

The Bhāgavata cult

The Bhāgavata cult is also known as the Pāñcarātra system. The origin of this name is uncertain. Its earliest occurrence is in the Pañcarātra sattra of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.[1] This is a sacrifice for five continuous days meant to secure supremacy to Lord Nārāyaṇa, who initiated it. Dr. Schrader is of the opinion that this sect took its name from this Pañcarātra sattra of Nārāyaṇa. Pāñcarātra can also point to the five principal subjects dealt with in the cult. The Nāradīya Saṃhitā says that the five kinds of rātri or knowledge are "tattva, mukti-prada, bhakti-prada, yaugika and vaiśeṣika."[2] In the Padma tantra it is said that "the five other great śāstras are like darkness in the presence of this; therefore it is currently known by the term Pāñcarātra.[3] In the Paramasaṃhitā the name is said to be due to the five qualities of mahābhūta, namely, the five gross elements, the five subtle elements, egoistry (ahaṅkāra) and buddhi, and the formless original matter (avyakta). These five constitute the rātris or gifts of Puruṣa. "Hence the Tantra or the Śāstra which treats of these gifts is called the Pāñcarātra." The word Pāñcarātra means only five nights and the cult is so called because Lord Nārāyaṇa expounded it in five successive nights as given in the Pañcarātra. This was all that it perhaps denoted originally.

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1. पुरुषो ह नारायणोऽकामयत। अतितिष्ठेयꣳ सर्वाणि भूतान्यहमेवेदꣳ सर्वं स्यामिति सऽ एतम्पुरुषमेधम्पञ्चरात्रं व्यूहक्रतुमपश्यत्तमाहरत्तेनायजत etc. Śata. Brāh. XIII. 6. 1. 1.
2. Nārada Saṃhitā I. 1. 69.
3. Padma Tantra I. 39–40.

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Nārāyaṇiya section of the Mahābhārata

The Bhagavad Gītā is the text of the Bhāgavatas where bhakti "in conjunction with the yoga doctrine of desireless action was taught on the foundation of Sāṅkhya." But since the Gītā deals as much with bhakti as with knowledge and action we have to look elsewhere for a representation of the doctrines of the Bhāgavata cult. The Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata is one of the authorities of the Pāñcarātra system, in fact the oldest. It teaches that bhakti and the grace of God are essential for the attainment of Mukti. The god here is called Nārāyaṇa. It is said that there were seven Citraśikhaṇḍin Ṛṣis who proclaimed on Mount Meru a śāstra called the Ekāntika Dharma, which was as important as the four Vedas. This śāstra contained 100,000 verses and was meant for the common man. Śvetadvīpa or the white island, which is the heaven of the devotees of Nārāyaṇa and which Nārada visited is described in detail in this section.

The sage Nārada desiring to see the God Nārāyaṇa in his original form raised himself by yoga and reached Mount Meru. North of the Meru mountain, in the milly ocean, he saw a white island and on the island he saw "white men without sense organs, who took no nourishment, whose eyes did not wink, from whom a pleasant scent emanated, who were free from all sin, at the sight of whom evil men were dazzled, whose bodies were as bone hard as diamond, who were indifferent both to honour and scorn, like unto the children of heaven in form, endowed with shining strength, with heads in the shape of sun-shades. Their voice resembled the rushing of torrents of rain, they had four equal testicles, feet like lotus leaves, sixty white teeth and eight fangs; they licked their sun-like faces with their tongues, and were full of love for God." [1] Nārāyaṇa taught Nārada the Ekāntika Dharma which preached devotion to Vāsudeva as the only means of perfection. This Dharma was handed down to Bṛhaspati who had as his disciple the prince Vasu Uparicara. Vasu Uparicara started a horse-sacrifice where no animals were killed.

1. Quoted from Winternitz. H. I. L. pp. 439–40.

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The oblations were prepared according to the teachings of the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. The God worshipped was Hari and He was seen only by Vasu Uparicara, not even by Bṛhaspati. It is clearly said that Hari is to be seen only by one who worships Him with sincere devotion like Vasu Uparicara. He does not reveal Himself to those who follow the sacrificial mode of worship like Bṛhaspati or even to persons who practise austerities for years together like Ekata, Dvita and Trita. This is the new religion which glorified bhakti or devotion greater than everything else and like Buddhism condemned animal sacrifices and austerities. Vāsudeva is, according to this faith, the Supreme God; Saṁkarṣaṇa sprang from Him, Pradyumna from Saṁkarṣaṇa and Aniruddha from Pradyumna. They are identified respectively with the individual soul, the mind and ahaṅkāra or egoism. It is stated in the Nārāyaṇīya that 'this Ekāntika Dharma was revealed in the Hari Gītā.' Thus the Ekāntika Dharma is the same as the theistic system taught in the Gītā and later called the Bhāgavata or Pāñcarātra system.

The most important texts of the Pāñcarātra or Bhāgavata system are (as already mentioned in the previous chapter) the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, the Gītā and Anugīta portions of the Mahābhārata, the early Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and the Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas. The Pāñcarātra Saṁhitās are quite numerous. Dr. Schrader in his "Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Samhitās" pp. 6–12 mentions the names of nearly 224 Saṃhitās found mentioned in the various texts.

From these we get an idea of the Bhāgavata philosophy; its conception of the Deity, the Deity's relation to the world and the finite self, its Vyūha theory etc.

Some doctrines of the Bhāgavata cult

Creation

According to the Bhāgavata faith a single day of Brahman is 432,000,000 years of men. "When the day is over all forms

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are dissolved by fire etc; but not so the tattvas (elements and organs) by which these consist, nor the cosmic egg as such. This dissolution is called a Minor or Occasional dissolution (avāntara pralaya, naimittika pralaya). It is followed by the Night of Brahman" of equal length in which the Egg hibernates as it were. This process goes on 360×100 times after which Brahman's life ends by the Great or Total Dissolution (mahāpralaya, prākṛta pralaya), in which all the Cosmic Eggs together with the forces in them are completely dissolved or unified. The Night that follows is of the same duration as that of the life of Brahman and then the whole process of Day and Night is repeated.

In the last part of the Night of the Great Dissolution the Śakti of Viṣṇu, spoken of figuratively as the consort of Viṣṇu, awakens as it were by His command and appears in her dual aspect of Kriyā and Bhūti or Force and Matter. At this stage the six attributes of God make their appearance. These attributes or guṇas have nothing to do with the ordinarily known three guṇas–sattva, rajas and tamas. These six guṇas are essential for creation and their evolution does not in any way affect the essence of God for it is only a manifestation.

Jñāna is the first guṇa and it is the essence and attribute of Brahman.

Aiśvarya is the second guṇa, namely, "activity based on independence."

Śakti (ability) is the third guṇa. It is (ability) 'potency' i.e. to become the material cause of the world (Jagatprakṛtibhāva).

The fourth guṇa is Bala (strength) defined as "absence of fatigue" (śramahāni) or "fatiguelessness in connection with the production of the world" or "power to sustain all things" or "sustaining power" (dhāraṇasāmarthya).

Vīrya or 'virility' is the fifth guṇa which stands for "unaffectedness" "in spite of being the material cause."

And the sixth guṇa is tejas or "splendour" meaning "self-sufficiency" (Sahakāri anapekṣa).

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The six guṇas form the material of Pure Creation. Pure Creation consists of Vāsudeva and Lakṣmī (Śakti), the Vyūhas, the Avatāras and Vaikuṇṭha. The six guṇas as a whole make up the body of Vāsudeva and this can be called the first Vyūha. Vāsudeva, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are known as the four Vyūhas. Vāsudeva is characterised by the six guṇas and from Him emanates Saṁkarṣaṇa. The word Vyūha is a combination of √uh "to shove" with the preposition 'vi' meaning "shoving asunder of the six guṇas into three pairs." [1] Thus in Saṁkarṣaṇa only two attributes out of the six are manifest; they are Jñāna and bala. In Pradyumna they are aiśvarya and vīrya and in Aniruddha they are śakti and tejas. But this does not mean that each Vyūha has only its two respective guṇas but "each Vyūha is Viṣṇu Himself with His six guṇas of which, however, only two in each case become manifest."

With Saṁkarṣaṇa the non-pure creation (creation of the universe) becomes manifest "in an embryonic condition." At this stage the whole creation exists in a germinal condition. From Saṁkarṣaṇa comes Pradyumna and through Pradyumna Puruṣa and Prakṛti make their first appearance.[2] Puruṣa is the Group Soul called Kūṭastha Puruṣa "which is the primordial form of all finite souls in the mass" and Prakṛti is Māyā Śakti or Primordial Matter plus Subtle Time. The Kūṭastha Puruṣa has within itself the four orders of men and Māyā Śakti appears in two forms—the Guṇa body (known as Prakṛti in Sāṅkhya) containing the three guṇas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and "the Timebody consisting of Kāla (Time) and Niyati (Restriction)." Aniruddha next takes over the creation of Pradyumna and there successively emerge the following principles—first directly from Aniruddha emerge Śakti; then from Śakti Niyati, from Niyati Kāla, from Kāla the Sattva guṇa from that the Rajoguṇa, and from the latter the Tamoguṇa. As these different principles emerge the Kūṭastha Puruṣa (who is also called the Manus) enters into

1. चातुरात्म्यस्थितिर्विष्णोर्गुणव्यतिकरोद्भवा Ahirbudh. Sam. V. 21.
2. भोक्तृभोग्यसमष्टिस्तु निलीना तत्र तिष्ठति । Lakṣmī. Tantra VI. 10.

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each one of them and stays in it for some time, "which means that the Manus appropriate successively the individual faculty which each of these tattvas is capable of bestowing." When the Kūṭastha Puruṣa has entered the Tamoguṇa, the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) join together and form what is known as the Mūlaprakṛti (Avyakta). After this, evolution is more or less on the lines of Sāṅkhya philosophy; but whereas in the Sāṅkhya there are only two principles to begin with in the Pāñcarātra system "the process is regarded as being influenced by a third principle i. e. Time (Kāla). Moreover in the classical Sāṅkhya there are many Puruṣas whereas at this stage the Pāñcarātra has only one Puruṣa (Kūṭastha).

From Avyakta or Mūlaprakṛti there emerges Mahat (the great principle) which is three-fold consistent with its three guṇas. Its Tāmasa element appears as Kāla, its Sattva element as Buddhi (Reason, intellect) and its Rajas element as Prāṇa (vitality). [1]

From Mahat proceeds Ahaṁkāra which has a Sāttvic, Rājasic and Tāmasic aspect called Vaikārika, Taijasa and Bhūtādi respectively. And from Ahaṅkāra evolve manas (mind), the ten organs (five of senses and five of action) and the corresponding elements of the universe. It will be seen that the creation accounts of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (given earlier in Chapter II) follow this tradition of the Bhāgavata School. The following table from Dr. Schrader's 'Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitās' illustrates this evolution clearly—

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1. स महान् नाम, तस्यापि विधास् तिस्रः प्रकीर्तिताः ।
सात्त्विको बुद्धिरित्युक्तो राजसः प्राण एव हि ॥
तामसः काल इत्युक्तस्तेषां व्याख्यामिमां शृणु ।
बुद्धिरध्यवसायस्य प्राणः प्रयतनस्य च ।
कालः कलनरूपस्य परिणामस्य कारणम् ॥

Lakṣmī Tantra. XVI. 2-4.

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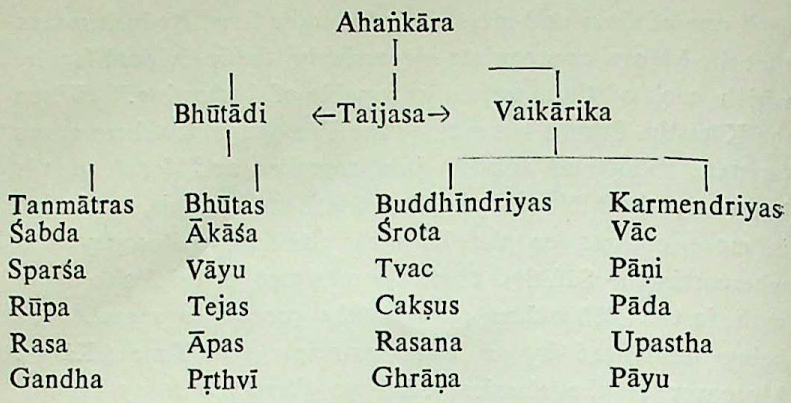

The Śabda tanmātra (sound-in-itself) is produced from the Bhūtādi in cooperation with Taijasa and the Śabda-tanmātra is the immediate cause of ether (ākāśa); at the same time ākāśa combined with the Taijasa is transformed by Vaikārika into hearing (śrotra) and from the latter is produced speech (vāc). Then from sound-in-itself is produced touch-in-itself (sparśa) which in its turn is the immediate cause of Air (vāyu), while as a mediate cause it helps in producing the skin sense (tvac) with the help of which finally the faculty of handling (pāṇi) originates." And the process goes on like this till pāyu is originated.

When all the elements have been evolved the Principles right from Mahat downwards to the elements unite to form a Cosmic Egg under the influence of the foremost Puruṣa. [1] From the Egg Brahmā the Creator is born and from him descend "all things movable and immovable." [2]

The Cosmic activities of the Vyūhas have been described. They also have ethical activities which are as follows—the teaching of the Ekāntika Dharma-śāstra by Saṁkarṣaṇa, the putting into practice the same dharma by Pradyumna and the preaching by Aniruddha of the result of such practice of

1. तदा संहत्य चान्योन्यं भगवच्छक्तिचोदिताः ।
सदसत्त्वमुपादाय चोभयं ससृजुर्ह्यदः
वर्षपूगसहस्रान्ते तदण्डमुदकेशयम् ।
कालकर्मस्वभावस्थो जीवोऽजीवमजीवयत् ॥ Bhā. P. II. 5. 33–34.
2. Bhā. P. III. 8. 15 ff.

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the dharma. The Vyūha theory is present in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata where Saṁkarṣaṇa is thought to represent the individual soul, (Jīvātman) Pradyumna the Manas and Aniruddha the Ahaṅkāra. But this theory of Vyūhas does not appear either in the Bhagavad Gītā or the Anugītā. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (book V) the Vyūhas are mentioned as names of Kṛṣṇa and the members of his family. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we find mention of the four Vyūhas in numerous places. [1]

According to the Nārāyaṇīya, creation takes place when Vāsudeva, the Supreme, enters the earth, wind, space, water and light and appears as Jīva, also known as Saṁkarṣaṇa. From Saṁkarṣaṇa evolves Pradyumna, the Mind of all beings, and from him Aniruddha who is consciousness. Aniruddha is the creator but Vāsudeva the Supreme Being underlies the creation. Thus as J. C. Chatterji remarks in his 'Kaśmīr Śaivism' it is "a process which while bringing the product into existence leaves the source of the product unchanged."

Para-Vāsudeva and Vyūha Vāsudeva

Though Vāsudeva is the Supreme Deity in the Pāñcarātra faith, the Para-Vāsudeva is sometimes distinguished from the Vyūha Vāsudeva. The Para Vāsudeva is regarded as the unchanging Himself but is the ultimate source of all change. In fact to preserve the unchanging quality of the Para it is stated that the Śakti of Vāsudeva is reponsible for Creation. As shown above the Śakti of Viṣṇu in her dual aspect of Kriyā and Bhūti is at the origin of the evolution of the universe.

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1. नमः पङ्कजनाभाय भूतसूक्ष्मेन्द्रियात्मने ।
वासुदेवाय शान्ताय कूटस्थाय स्वरोचिषे ॥
सङ्कर्षणाय सूक्ष्माय दुरन्तायान्तकाय च ।
नमो विश्वप्रबोधाय प्रद्युम्नायान्तरात्मने ॥
नमो नमोऽनिरुद्धाय हृषीकेशेन्द्रियात्मने ।
नमः परमहंसाय पूर्णाय निभृतात्मने ॥ Bhā. P. IV. 24. 34–36.
नमस्ते वासुदेवाय नमः सङ्कर्षणाय च ।
प्रद्युम्नायानिरुद्धाय तुभ्यं भगवते नमः ॥ Ibid. XI. 5. 29.
वासुदेवः सङ्कर्षणः प्रद्युम्नः पुरुषः स्वयम् ।
अनिरुद्ध इति ब्रह्मन् मूर्तिव्यूहोऽभिधीयते ॥ Ibid. XII. 11. 21.

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S'akti of Viṣṇu

But the Śakti of Viṣṇu called Śrī or Lakṣmī has no existence apart from Viṣṇu; yet again "in spite of frequent assurances as to the real identity of Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu, the two are actually regarded as distinct; even in Pralaya they do not completely coalesce but become, only as it were, a single principle, [1] the Lakṣmī eventually emerging from the Great Night being the old Lakṣmī not a new one." Thus in order to preserve Viṣṇu's transcendent nature Śakti, though associated with Creation, is regarded as distinct from Him so that the Para is left unchanged. This same purpose is served in the Purāṇas by introducing Brahmā as the creator. Viṣṇu entrusts the task to Brahmā and vanishes into His blissful form. [2] But this does not prevent the same Purāṇas from declaring Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva to be aspects of One and the same Deity. [3] These are various trends in the development of the idea of the Deity. When the Supreme is regarded as unchanging and Actionless, He has nothing to do with creation as such. Hence an intermediary principle is introduced. But when the necessity of explaining the Creator in relation to the Supreme arises, He is at once proclaimed to be an aspect of the Supreme—the Deity appearing as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva for the purposes of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe.

Description of the Deity in the Bhāgavata School

The Supreme Deity in the Bhāgavata faith is described both as transcendent and immanent very much like in the

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1. संकर्षणोदयो यावदहः पौरुषमिष्यते ।
तावती पौरुषी रात्रिः संहृताखिलवस्तुका ॥ Ahirbudh. Sam. IV. 78.
2. Bhā. P. III. 9. 29–44.
3. सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति प्रकृतेर्गुणास्तैर्युक्तः परः पुरुष एक इहास्य धत्ते ।
स्थित्यादये हरिविरिञ्चिहरेति संज्ञाः श्रेयांसि तत्र खलु सत्त्वतनोर्नृणां स्युः ॥
Bhā. P. I. 3. 23.
सृजामि तन्नियुक्तोऽहं हरो हरति तद्वशः ।
विश्वं पुरुषरूपेण परिपाति त्रिशक्तिधृक् ॥ Ibid. II. 6. 31.

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Upaniṣads. Thus in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is said [1]—"It is You alone, O Lord, who, having evolved the Mahat-tattva and all these other phenomena by Your Own Potency called Māyā consisting of the three guṇas (which are capable of assuming multitudious forms) enter them as their Inner Controller, and presiding over the illusory senses (which are mere transformation of the three guṇas) appear as many, though really One, even as fire appears diversified in relation to different pieces of wood." The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also contains passages which describe the Deity in a similar light. [2] The Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata just abounds in such descriptions and so does the Anugītā.

Whereas the Deity is ordinarily described as unknowable and indescribable, all these obstacles vanish in front of a devout bhakta. To a devoted soul the Supreme Being reveals Himself as did Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gītā. In the Nārāyaṇīya it is taught how king Uparicara was the only person to be blessed with the sight of the Lord excluding even the great Bṛhaspati. The reason given is that Vasu Uparicara devoted himself heart and soul to the Deity and hence was rewarded with the vision. The Bhāgavata and Viṣṇu Purāṇa narrate stories of bhaktas like Prahlāda, Dhruva, Uddhava, Śuka and the Gopīs who realised Bhagavān through their unalloyed devotion.

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1. एकत्वमेव भगवन्निदमात्मशक्त्या मायाख्ययोरुगुणया महदाद्यशेषम् ।
सृष्ट्वानुविश्य पुरुषस्तदसद्गुणेषु नानेव दारुषु विभावसुवद्विभासि ॥

Bhā. P. IV. 9. 7.

2. नमामि सर्वं सर्वेशमनन्तमजमव्ययम् ।
लोकधाम धराधारमप्रकाशमभेदिनम् ॥
नारायणमणीयांसमशेषाणामणीयसाम् ।
समस्तानां गरिष्ठं च भूरादीनां गरीयसाम् ॥
यत्र सर्वं यतः सर्वमुत्पन्नं मत्पुरःसरम् ।
सर्वभूतश्च यो देवः पराणामपि यः परः ॥
भोक्तारं भोग्यभूतं च स्रष्टारं सृज्यमेव च ।
कार्यकर्तृस्वरूपं तं प्रणताः स्म परं पदम् ॥ Viṣ. P. I. 9. 40–42 and 50.

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Advaita and the Bhāgavata School

As Schrader remarks in his "Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and Ahirbudhnya Samhitās" the Bhāgavata faith reveals an Advaitic influence. In many places the individual soul and the Supreme Deity are spoken of as one and the same. Bhāgavata Purāna I. 2. 32 [1] has a definite Advaitic leaning and again I. 9. 42 [2] expresses the same thought when it says—"Having shaken off the foolish idea of diversity I have realized that unborn Lord, who, though One, is severally enthroned in the hearts of all embodied creatures brought forth by Himself even as the Sun, though One, appears as many to every eye." Another utterance of a purely advaitic nature is II. 5. 5 [3] which runs as follows—"Even as a spider spins a web out of its own mouth without any exertion and sports in that web so do you create all beings in your own self by your own energy and remain unchanged yourself." It will be noticed here that the imagery of a spider weaving its web and taking it back into itself is purely Upaniṣadic. Viṣṇu Purāṇa I. 19. 72 [4] also conveys an advaitic sense. But the general trend in the whole of the Bhāgavata literature is to distinguish between the Supreme and Individual souls. So also the world and its attributes is not considered a mere illusion (māyā) which has no real existence and which is the result of sheer avidyā or ignorance. A realistic attitude seeking to explain the relationship between the world and the Deity is manifest in the Bhāgavata literature.

According to the Pāñcarātra faith there is a belief that souls exist eternally in a subtle form within the Deity. Thus

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1. यथा ह्यवहितो वह्निर्दारुण्येकः स्वयोनिषु ।
   नानेव भाति विश्वात्मा भूतेषु च तथा पुमान् ॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 32.
2. तमिममहमजं शरीरभाजां हृदि हृदि धिष्ठितमात्मकल्पितानाम् ।
   प्रतिदृशमिव नैकधार्कमेकं समधिगतोऽस्मि विधूतभेदमोहः ॥ Ibid. I. 9. 42.
3. आत्मन् भावयसे तानि न पराभावयन् स्वयम् ।
   आत्मशक्तिमवष्टभ्य ऊर्णनाभिरिवाक्लमः ॥ Ibid. II. 5. 5.
4. मय्यन्यत्र तथान्येषु भूतेषु भुवनेषु च ।
   तवैव व्याप्तिरैश्वर्यगुणसंसूचिकी प्रभो ॥ Viṣ. P. I. 19. 72.

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even prior to creation the Deity contains within Itself all souls.[1] Once creation takes place the Individual self is taken to be dominated by the Supreme self as its "principle of consciousness." But there is no identification. This may be due to the fact that the many inconsistencies or evils present among individual souls makes it difficult to reconcile them with the All-perfect, Supreme God. But even the existence of the Supreme as the principle of consciousness presents the problems of explaining its relation to the imperfection of the individual soul. That is done so by saying that though residing in the body He is untainted by the acts of the body. Moreover the imperfections of an individual soul are explained as due to the result of its previous karma and the Supreme Being has nothing at all to do with them. But again the Supreme Being is not altogether indifferent. He is characterised as One who takes great interest and love in the welfare of individual souls and thus, when necessary, enters the world in a finite form. This is the avatāra of God and the whole Bhāgavata literature deals in detail with the various incarnations of the Deity.

The theory of incarnation

In the history of Hinduism the theory of incarnation has played a great part in preserving the fundamental unity of the religion as well as in assimilating some good points from other religions. Thus, for instance, Buddha and Kapila propounders of Buddhism and the Sāṅkhya systems of thought, were raised to the status of Viṣṇu's incarnations. The influ-

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1. (a) अस्मात्स परमव्योम्नस्तिष्ठत्यर्वाचि वै पदे ।
सर्वात्मनां समष्टिर्या कोशो मधुकृतामिव ॥
शुद्धयशुद्धिमयो भावो भूतेः स पुरुषः स्मृतः ।
अनादिवासनारेणुकुण्ठितैरात्मभिश्चितः ॥ Ahirbudh. Sam. VI. 33–34.
(b) Lakṣmī Tantra VII. 11–12.
(c) सोऽन्तः शरीरेऽर्पितभूतसूक्ष्मः कालात्मिकां शक्तिमुदीरयाणः ।
उवास तस्मिन् सलिले पदे स्वे यथानलो दारुणि रुद्धवीर्यः ॥
Bhā. P. III. 8. 11.

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ence of Buddhism on Hinduism is clearly seen on the ethical side. The theory of Ahiṃsā and the emphasis on right conduct in Buddhism has penetrated Hinduism as well. Kapila's Sāṅkhya system of thought pervades all later Hindu belief and its theory of creation has come to occupy the most important place among the different theories of creation.

This later method of raising great men to the status of avatāras probably indicates a former practice. Incarnations like that of a fish, boar, tortoise etc. probably point to a belief in non-human forms of Gods among certain classes of people. By admitting them as various incarnations of Viṣṇu, cordial relations were maintained between the worshippers of different gods. A man who worshipped the Fish was as much a Viṣṇu worshipper as one who worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Avatāra in Vedic literature

The idea of incarnation or avatāra is very old. Incarnations as such are not found in the Veda. But the habit of thought which identifies one god with another is reflected in the Vedas. They had not as yet arrived at the idea of an incarnation of a god. Almost identical qualities are enumerated with reference to various deities and the idea that One God, for instance Agni, is the same as Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra and Aryaman finds expression in the Veda.[1] The conception that the Highest Being manifests Himself in various forms is found in the Upaniṣads and it is a development in the opposite direction of the idea of the Veda—namely, if several gods like Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa are just one god Agni, then one god may become several. From this idea it is only one more step to the idea of incarnation—if one god can become several He can also assume any form He desires in order to achieve some specific purpose.

Avatāra in the Gītā

Avatāra denotes the coming down of God to earth and the idea conveyed by it "is that of a deity that intervenes

1. RV. V. 3. 1-2.

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when man, forgetting the divine within him, shows a tendency to lapse into the state of a mere natural being." [1] Thus the Gītā says "When righteousness wanes and unrighteousness begins to flourish then I become incarnate." [2] The chief motive, according to the Bhagavad Gītā, for God's incarnation on earth is "the establishment of Righteousness."

Avatara in the Purāṇas

The doctrine of Avatāra occupies a prominent place in the post-Vedic literature; especially in the epics and the Purāṇas. While the Bhagavadgītā and the Anugītā merely mention the doctrine of repeated incarnation the Purāṇas and the Bhāgavata literature describe in detail the various incarnations of the Supreme Being. The incarnations of Viṣṇu are usually reckoned as ten. They are the Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Dāśarathi Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalkin. Though this is the popular list there are variations both in the order as well as in the number. Thus the Vāyu Purāṇa mentions in one place the ten avatāras as Nārāyaṇa, Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Dattātreya, Māndhātā, Jāmadagnya Rāma, Vedavyāsa, Kṛṣṇa and Kalkin. The Nārāyaṇīya describes the ten avatāras in three different lists—XII. 349. 37; 399. 77–90; 399. 104. In 339. 70–99 the avatāras are given as Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Rāma Bhārgava, Rāma Dāśarathi and Kṛṣṇa. In another list the ten avatāras are enumerated as Haṃsa, Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmanadeha, Paraśurāma, Rāma Dhanurdhara, Vedavid and Kalkin. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions as many as twentytwo avatāras and adds that the descents of the Lord are countless and never-ending.[3] In the Varāha and Agni Purāṇas the names of the different incarnations are Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣna, Buddha and Kalki.

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1. Hiriyanna, 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy' p. 98.
2. Gītā IV. 7. Quoted earlier in chapter IV.
3. Bhā. P. I. 3. 26. Quoted earlier in chapter I.

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Avatāra in the Bhāgavata School

The Bhāgavata school, however, distinguishes between a Vyūha and an Avatāra. Vyūhas are mentioned in connection with cosmological activities whereas Avatāras are concerned with Divine Sport (līlā) with the individual souls. Avatāras are also known as Vibhavas [1] and the Sātvata Saṁhitā mentions as many as thirtynine Vibhavas. They are; Padmanābha, Dhruva, Ananta, Śaktyātman, Madhusūdana, Vidyādhideva, Kapila, Viśvarūpa, Vihaṅgama, Krodhātman, Baḍabāvaktra, Dharma, Vāgīśvara, Ekārṇavaśāyin, Kāmatheśvara, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Pīyūṣaharaṇa, Śrīpati, Kāntātman, Rāhujit, Kālanemighna, Pārijātahara, Lokanātha, Śāntātman, Dattātreya, Nyagrodhaśāyin, Ekaśṛṇgatanu, Vāmanadeha, Trivikrama, Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Paraśurāma, Rāma Dhanurdhara, Vedavid, Kalkin and Pātālaśayana. The Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā also has the same list. Tattvatraya, a Vaiṣṇava treatise, classifies avatāras as primary and secondary. [2] The two Avatāras, primary and secondary, are given in detail in the Viṣvaksena Saṁhitā as well. Primary avatāras are those that have a non-Prakṛtic form i.e. "Viṣṇu Himself with a transcendent body." These are the avatāras that should be worshipped by those who desire salvation. Primary avatāras are further subdivided into Pūrṇa, Aṁśa and Kalāvatāras.

Those who desire power, wealth and other worldly comforts should worship the secondary avatāras. The Viṣvaksena Saṁhitā mentions Śiva, Brahmā, Buddha, Vyāsa, Arjuna, Paraśurāma and Kubera as instances of secondary avatāras. Secondary avatāras are also further subdivided into Śakti and Vibhūti avatāras.

Vyūhas

The Vyūhas, as mentioned above, in connection with creation, are four in number. They are Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa,

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1. विभवो नाम तत्तत्सजातीयरूपेणाविर्भावः ।
2. तत्राप्राकृतविग्रहा अजहत्स्वभावविभवा दीपादुत्पन्नवत् स्थिता मुख्यप्रादुर्भावाः सर्वे मुमुक्षूणामुपास्या गौणप्रादुर्भावाः सर्वेऽहंकारयुक्तजीवाधिष्ठातृत्वान्मुमुक्षूणामुपास्याः । Tattvatrayam.

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Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Each of these Vyūhas has a part to play in the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. Though the Supreme Vāsudeva is the abode of all attributes, six of them are mentioned as very important. They are knowledge, power, prowess, supremacy, energy and splendour. Vyūha Vāsudeva has all these six guṇas in him and is described as "moonlike in colour, wears a yellow dress and holds a conch, a discus and a mace in His three hands vouchsafing absence of fear to the devotees with the fourth. The eagle is the emblem of His banner." [1]

The Vyūha Saṅkarṣaṇa has knowledge and power as the predominant qualities. He is then described as being "the colour of yellow topaz, wearing a blue garb and holding a plough, a pestle and a conch in His three hands, keeping the fourth hand in a position symbolizing protection to the distressed. The emblem of his banner is palmyra." [2]

The qualities of prowess and supremacy predominate in Pradyumna. He is radiant like the rays of the sun. "He wears a red garment and holds a bow, arrows and a conch in His three hands keeping the fourth hand free to offer fearlessness to His devotees. The crocodile is the emblem in His banner." [3]

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1. तत्राद्यं भगवद्रूपं हिमकुन्देन्दुकान्तिमत् ।
चतुर्भुजं सौम्यवक्त्रं पुण्डरीकनिभेक्षणम् ॥
पीतकौशेयवसनं सुपर्णध्वजशोभितम् ।
मुख्यदक्षिणहस्तेन भीतानामभयप्रदम् ॥
विद्याकोशस्तु वामेन संगृहीतश्च शङ्खराट् ।
पृष्ठगे ह्यपरस्मिंश्च प्रोद्यतो दक्षिणे स्वरी ।
तथाविधे गदा वामे निषण्णा वसुधातले ॥ Sāt. Sam. 5. 9-11.

2. सिन्दूरशिखराकारमेकवक्त्रं चतुर्भुजम् ।
अतसीपुष्पसंकाशवासोभृत् तालल्लाञ्छितम् ॥
मुख्येन पाणियुग्मेन तुल्यमाद्यस्य वै विभोः ।
सीरं चक्रं च हस्तेऽस्य मुसलं तु गदा करे ॥ Ibid. 5. 12. 14.

3. प्रावृण्निशासमुदितखद्योतचयदीपितम् ।
रक्तकौशेयवसनं मकरध्वजशोभितम् ॥
एकवक्त्रं चतुर्बाहुं तृतीयं परमेश्वरम् ।
मुख्यं हस्तद्वयं चास्य प्राग्वद् ध्येयं महामते ।
वामे परस्मिन्शार्ङ्गं च दक्षिणे बाणपञ्चकम् ॥ Ibid. 5. 14. 16.

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And Aniruddha is characterised by energy and splendour. He is blue in colour "wears a white dress and wields a sword, a club and a conch in His three hands, while His fourth hand extends fearlessness to man. The deer is the emblem of His banner." [1]

Sub-Vyūhas

The Bhāgavata literature sometimes mentions more than four Vyūhas. [2] Again from each of the four Vyūhas there emanate some sub-Vyūhas. Thus from Vāsudeva we have Keśava, Nārāyaṇa and Mādhava; from Saṅkarṣaṇa Govinda, Viṣṇu and Madhusūdana; from Pradyumna Trivikrama, Vāmana and Śrīdhara and from Aniruddha Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha and Dāmodara. A glance at the various sub-vyūhas suggests that they are all names of Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva. This sub-Vyūha method was probably adopted in order to confirm the divinity of Vāsudeva in all his different names.

Avatāras, according to the Bhāgavata system of thought, are not limited to human and non-human forms; even-plants can become avatāras. The Viṣvaksena Saṁhitā mentions the crooked mango tree in the Daṇḍaka forest as belonging to this class of incarnations. An image of God, though inanimate, can become an incarnation, called the Arcā avatāra, as soon as it is consecrated according to the Pāñcarātra rites. And lastly there is the Antaryāmī Avatāra which is the Supreme as the Inner Ruler of all souls. [3]

Just as the love of the Supreme Being makes Him assume different forms in order to help humanity, His divine grace frees many a soul from the shackles of saṁsāra. Though one's karma influences the destiny of a soul it vanishes before

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1. अञ्जनाद्रिप्रतीकाशं सुसिताम्बरवेष्टितम् ।
चतुर्भुजं विशालाक्षं मृगलाञ्छनभूषितम् ॥
आदिवत्पाणियुगलमाद्यमस्यापि कीर्तितम् ।
दक्षिणादिक्रमेणाथ द्वाभ्यां वै खड्गखेटकौ ॥ Sāt. Sam. 5. 17. 18.
2. (a) चतुःपञ्चनवव्यूहदशद्वादशमूर्तये ।
(b) ·····सात्वतां नवमूर्तीनामादिमूर्तिरहं परा ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 16. 32.
3. नियन्ता सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

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the grace of the Lord. [1] The theory of grace is mentioned in the Kaṭhopaniṣad where it is said that only he attains salvation whom God wants to. The thought is expressed in the Nārāyaṇīya when it says—"That person upon whom Nārāyaṇa looks with compassion succeeds in becoming awakened. No one, O king, can become awakened through his own wishes." [2] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa narrates the lives of many saints like Uddhava, Nārada, Akrūra and others who attained Mokṣa through Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grace.

The Bhāgavata faith believes in Divine grace but it is only to a selected few. Only those souls are favoured who are untainted by rajas and tamas and who lead a life dedicated to Nārāyaṇa. Though knowledge and yogic practices are mentioned as effective for Mokṣa, they are much inferior to bhakti as a means for salvation. [3] Mokṣa according to the Bhāgavata school has been already discussed in the previous chapter.

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1. यत्पादपङ्कजपलाशविलासभक्त्या कर्माशयं ग्रथितमुद्ग्रथयन्ति सन्तः ।
तद्वन्न रिक्तमतयो यतयोऽपि रुद्धस्रोतोगणास्तमरणं भज वासुदेवम् ॥
Bhā. P. IV. 22. 39.

2. Quoted from Bharatan Kumarappa, *op. cit.* p. 114.

3. नष्टप्रायेष्वभद्रेषु नित्यं भागवतसेवया ।
भगवत्युत्तमश्लोके भक्तिर्भवति नैष्ठिकी ॥
तदा रजस्तमोभावाः कामलोभादयश्च ये ।
चेत एतैरनाविद्धं स्थितं सत्त्वे प्रसीदति ॥
एवं प्रसन्नमनसो भगवद्भक्तियोगतः ।
भगवत्तत्त्वविज्ञानं मुक्तसङ्गस्य जायते ॥ Bhā. P. I. 2. 18–20.
हृदि यदि भगवाननादिरास्ते हरिरसिशङ्खगदाधरोऽव्ययात्मा ।
तदघमघविघातकर्तुभिन्नं भवति कथं सति चान्धकारमर्के ॥ Viṣ. P. III. 7. 27.

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CHAPTER VI

Vaiṣṇavism in different parts of India with special reference to the Bhāgavata dharma.

We have already tried to prove that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was in existence in the fifth century A. D. Its influence as a gospel of bhakti started very early and spread in all directions. The different Vaiṣṇava movements throughout India drew their inspiration from the fountain head, the Bhāgavata literature which includes the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, and within a thousand years i.e. by about the 15th century A. D. Vaiṣṇavism preaching bhakti as the sole means to mokṣa was established in the North, South, East and West of India. Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka, Caitanya are all names in the field of bhakti, everyone of whom founded systems based on bhakti as the surest means for salvation and they all owed a lot to the Bhāgavata dharma.

Epigraphy is one of the chief sources of information of the history of any movement and Vaiṣṇavism is not lacking in inscriptional evidence. The Ghosundi inscription of Rājasthan, the Besnagar inscription and the Nānāghāt cave inscriptions have been mentioned earlier in the previous chapter. They all belong to the pre-Christian era.

During the Mauryan king Aśoka's reign there was a setback to Hinduism in general probably because Aśoka openly supported Buddhism and the other religions were not taken much notice of. But when the Śuṅga dynasty came into power by about 185 B. C. we hear of Puṣyamitra celebrating the famous horse sacrifice (aśvamedha). The ninth king of the Śuṅga dynasty was named Bhāgavata and the founder of the Kaṇva dynasty was called Vāsudeva.

During the early centuries of the Christian era the Śaka and Kuṣāṇa kings of North India were either Śaivites or Buddhists. But with the rise of the Guptas the Bhāgavata religion came into its own and flourished in the Punjab,

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Rajputana and other parts of the country. The Gupta kings called themselves Paramabhāgavatas as the coins of that period testify.

Kṛṣṇa, in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, is the most important avatāra of Lord Viṣṇu, in fact he is Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself. Thus it will be appropriate to mention here those inscriptions connected with Viṣṇu.

Inscriptions

The Tuśāna rock inscription was discovered in the Hissar district of Punjab and is assigned to the fourth century A. D. It contains an adoration to Viṣṇu "the mighty bee on the waterlily which is the face of Jāmbavatī." The object of this inscription is to record the making of two reservoirs and a house by an ācārya named Somatrāta, for the use of the God Viṣṇu under the name of Bhagavat or the Divine One.

The Udayagiri cave inscription bears the date 82 of the Gupta era. It contains two images—one image is of a four-armed god which is probably Viṣṇu and the other is of a twelve-armed goddess possibly Lakṣmī. [1]

The Bhītari pillar inscription was discovered in the Ghazipur District of U. P. It records the installation of the image of Śārṅgin and "the grant of a village for its worship by Skandagupta," in memory of his father Kumāragupta I. Skandagupta was a Paramabhāgavata and hence Śārṅgin must

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1. Udayagiri cave inscription translation—

Perfection has been attained. In the year 80 (and) 2, on the eleventh lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āṣāḍha—this (is) the appropriate religious gift of the Sanakānika the Mahārāja—dhala—the son's son of the Mahārāja Chhagalaga; (and) the son of the Mahārāja Viṣṇudāsa—who meditates on the feet of the Paramabhaṭṭāraka and the Mahārājādhirāja, the glorious Chandragupta (II).

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have been Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. [1] Śārṅga is also the name of Viṣṇu's bow.

The Junagadh inscription of the Gupta period contains an adoration to the Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu. [2]

Gangadhar is a village about 52 miles southwest of Jhalrapatan in the Western Malva Division of Central India. A stone inscription here of Viśvavarman (contemporary of Kumāragupta) records how a certain Mayurākṣaka, a minister of Viśvavarman built a temple of Viṣṇu. [3]

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1. Bhitari Pillar inscription translation—

Line 12—Who when (his) father had attained the skies, conquered (his) enemies by the strength of (his) arm and established again the ruined fortunes of (his) lineage; and then, crying "the victory has been achieved" betook himself to (his) mother, whose eyes were full of tears from joy, just as Kṛṣṇa, when he had slain (his) enemies betook himself to (his mother) Devakī ;—

Line 17—..... the fame of his father (saying to himself that) an image of some kind or other (should be made) he, the very celebrated one, made this image of that (famous god) Śārṅgin (to endure as long as the moon and stars may last). And, having here installed this god he, whose commands were well established has allotted this village (to the idol) in order to increase the religious merit of (his) father.

2. Junagadh Rock inscription translation—

Perfection has been attained ! Victorious is he (the god) Viṣṇu—the perpetual abode of the goddess Lakṣmī, whose dwelling is the water lily; the conqueror of distress; the completely victorious one,—who for the sake of the happiness of (Indra) the lord of the gods seized back from (the demon) Bali the goddess of wealth and splendour, who is admitted to be worthy of enjoyment, (and) who had been kept away from him for a very long time.

3. Gangadhar stone inscription of Viśvavarman (424–425 A.D.) translation—

Line 28—He, the illustrious Mayūrākṣaka..... caused to be built by his sons, the favourites of great good fortune, this shrine of the divine (god) Viṣṇu, which blocks up the path of sin.

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The Khoh copper plate inscription of the Mahārāja Jayanātha dated 496–97 A. D. is in the Baghelakhaṇḍ area of Central India. The inscription records the grant of a village by Jayanātha for the purpose of a temple of Bhagavān Viṣṇu.

The Khoh copper plate inscription of the Mahārāja Sarvanātha dated 512–13 A. D. records the grant by the Mahārāja of the village of Asramaka on the north bank of the river Tamasā, on the agreement between him and the grantees that it was to be applied to the purposes of a shrine of Viṣṇu under the title of Bhagavat.

The Khoh copper-plate inscription of Mahārāja Saṁkṣobha dated 528–29 A. D. records the grant by the Mahārāja Samkṣobha of the village of Opani to a temple of the goddess Piṣṭapurī, which is some local form of Lakṣmī. [1]

The Eran Stone pillar inscription belongs to the reign of Toramāṇa. "Eran is a village on the left bank of the Bina, eleven miles to the West by North from Khurai, a town in the Sagar District in Madhya Pradesh." The inscription is on the chest of a colossal red sandstone statue of a Boar representing the Varāhāvatāra of Viṣṇu. The object of this inscription is to record the building of the Varāhāvatāra temple by Dhanyaviṣṇu the younger brother of the deceased Mahārāja Mātṛviṣṇu. [2]

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1. The Khoh copper plate inscription of Mahārāja Samkṣobha (528–29 A. D.) translation—

   Om ! Reverence to the divine (god) Vāsudeva. Hail ! etc. etc.

   Line 3—By the Mahārāja the illustrious Samkṣobha..... for the purpose of increasing the religious merit of (his) parents and himself..... half the village of Opani in the Maninaga petha is granted by a copper charter..... for the purpose of observing the bali, charu and sattra at the temple which (he) has caused to be built, of the divine goddess Piṣṭapurī etc.

2. Eran-stone-Boar inscription of Toramana translation—

   Om ! Victorious is the god (Viṣṇu) who has the form of a Boar—who in the act of lifting up the earth (out of the waters) caused the mountains to tremble with the blows of (his) hard snout; (and) who is the pillar (for the support) of the great house which is the three worlds etc. etc.

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There is another stone inscription at Eran which is dated 484-85 A. D. It belongs to the reign of Budhagupta. It records the erection of a dhvajastaṁbha in honour of the god Viṣṇu under the name of Janārdana, by a Mahārāja named Mātṛviṣṇu and his younger brother Dhanyaviṣṇu. [1]

The Mehrauli Iron-pillar inscription of Candra is on the west side of a iron column which is sixteen inches in diameter at the base and twelve inches at the top. It is about 23 feet 8 inches high and is now lodged in the Kutab Minar area "in the ancient fort of Ray Pithora" within the limits of Mehrauli village. The inscription contains a posthumous praise of the conquests of a powerful king named Candra, who set up this lofty pillar in honour of Viṣṇu on the hill called Viṣṇu-pāda. Unfortunately the inscription is not dated.[2] But the Brāhmi script of this inscription has been deciphered as belonging to the Gupta period.

The Aphsad stone inscription of Ādityasena in Aphsad is in a "village near the right bank of the Sakari river about 15

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1. Eran stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta (484-85 A. D.) translation—

Victorious is the lord, the four-armed (god Viṣṇu)—whose conch is the broad waters of the four oceans; who is the cause of the continuance, the production and the destruction of the universe; (and) whose ensign is Garuḍa etc.

On this lunar day by the Mahārāja Mātṛviṣṇu.....and by his younger brother Dhanyaviṣṇu—this flag-staff of the divine (god) Janārdana, the troubler of the demons has been erected, for the purpose of increasing the religious merit of (their) parents etc.

2. Mehrauli posthumous Iron-pillar inscription of Candra translation—

.....Line 5—By him the king-who attained sole supreme sovereignty in the world, acquired by his own arm and (enjoyed) for a very long time; (and) who, having the name of Candra carried a beauty of countenance like (the beauty of) the full-moon—having in faith fixed his mind upon (the god) Viṣṇu, this lofty standard of the divine Viṣṇu was set up on the hill (called) Viṣṇupāda.

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miles towards the north-east of Nawada, the chief town in Gayā district." Ādityasena belonged to the family of the Guptas of Magadha. The object of the inscription is to record the building by Ādityasena of a temple of the god Viṣṇu. [1]

The Barabar hill "stands about a mile and a half away on the north side of the village of Panari which is about 14 miles to the north by east of Gayā." In the South part of this hill there is a cave temple and an inscription in the cave records the installation in the cave of an image of the god Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa by Anantavarman. [2]

The Gadhwa stone inscription in Allahabad is dated 467-68 A. D. It records the installation of an image of the god Viṣṇu under the name of Anantasvāmin and a grant for the purpose of providing perfumes, incense, garlands etc.

The Sarnath stone inscription of Prakaṭāditya seems to belong to the 7th century A. D. The object of it is to record the building of a temple of the god Viṣṇu under the name of Marudviṣ and some provision, the details of which are lost, for the repairs of it.

The much admired sculptures in the temple of Deogarh reveal the importance of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu Bhagavān. In one sculpture Viṣṇu as the Eternal is shown lying on the serpent Ananta with the other gods watching from above.

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1. Aphsad stone inscription of Ādityasena translation—
"This best of temples has been caused to be made on account of (the god) Viṣṇu by him the king.....etc.

2. Barabar hill cave inscription of Anantavarman translation—
Om ! He, Anantavarman, who was the excellent son captivating the hearts of mankind, of the illustrious Śārdūla (and) who, possessed of very great virtues adorned by his own (high) birth the family of the Maukhari kings–he, of unsullied fame, with joy caused to be made, as if it were his own fame represented in bodily form in the world, this beautiful image placed in (this) cave of the mountain Pravaragiri, of (the god) Kṛṣṇa etc. etc.

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Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life has provided the subject matter for a number of sculptures. Sculptures excavated at Mandor near Jodhpur are assigned to the period fifth century A. D. and they record incidents in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life. Thus one sculpture represents the overturning of a cart by the baby Kṛṣṇa; another features the holding of the hill Govardhana on the palm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on.

Vincent Smith considers the sculpture at Pathari in Bhopal to be one of the best in India. In this sculpture baby Kṛṣṇa is shown as lying by the side of his mother. The Daśāvatāra temple at Ellora contains images of Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Varāha and other incarnations.

The religious history of India from the time of the Guptas to the death of Śrī Harṣa was one of tolerance. Many temples were built during this period for the worship of any deity that one desired. There were adherents of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya and other gods. The works of Bāṇa and Huien T'sang's evidence bear testimony to the amicable relationship that existed between worshippers of different deities.

The Ālvārs

Rāmānuja is a name well known in the history of Vaiṣṇavism in the south of India but even prior to Rāmānuja there existed Bhāgavata devotees in the South called by the name of Ālvārs. In fact Rāmānuja owes a great deal to these devotees who are traditionally believed to have been descendants of those Brahmins of the Bhāgavata faith who migrated southwards. These Ālvārs flourished from about the third century A. D. to the ninth century A. D. They wrote mostly in Tamil and their writings are known as the Nālāyiraprabandham, a collection of four thousand verses in praise of the Deity. This collection was made by Nāthamuni in the tenth century A. D. and is used in Vaiṣṇava worship even today.

The traditional dates for the Ālvārs are 4203–2706 B. C. Some western scholars like Caldwell, Monier Williams and others place the Ālvārs later than Rāmānuja who is believed

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to have died in 1137 A. D. But the consesus of opinion now is that the Ālvārs were the predecessors of Rāmānuja and there is disagreement only in the relative dates of the different Ālvārs. There were twelve Ālvārs and the last among them called Tirumangai is supposed to have flourished in the first half of the eighth century A. D. The rest are earlier to him and Prof. S. Kṛṣṇaswāmī Aiyangar places the earliest among them in the second century A. D. and the last of them in the earlier half of the eighth century A. D. J. S. M. Hooper is inclined to place the earliest Ālvār in the middle of the seventh century A. D. and T. A. Gopinath Rao also seems to agree with him. What is more important than the date of the Ālvārs is the fact that their writings reveal "the depth of religious feeling to which the view of the Deity as incarnating Himself out of love for His creatures and desiring their whole hearted devotion gave rise."

The twelve Ālvārs are Pey Ālvār, Bhūtattālvār, Poikai Ālvār, Tirumalīṣai Ālvār, Nammālvār, Madhurakavi, Kulaśekhara Ālvār, Periyālvār, Āṇḍāl, Tondaradippodi Ālvār, Tiruppān Ālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār. The Sanskrit names were Saroyogī, Bhūtayogī, Mahāyogi, Bhaktisāra, Śaṭhakopa, Madhurakavi, Kulaśekhara, Viṣṇucitta, Godā, Bhaktāṅghrireṇu, Munivāhana and Parakāla. Of these twelve Āṇḍāl was a woman, Nammālvār was a Śūdra, Tirumangai belonged to the thief caste and Tiruppan was an outcaste thus proving the Bhāgavata ideal of castelessness.

Nammālvār was the most famous and the "most philosophic" of the Ālvārs. His works are the Tiruviruttam containing a hundred stanzas, the Tiruvāsiriam of seven stanzas, the Periya Tiruvandādi of eightyseven and the Tiruvaymoli of thousand one hundred and two stanzas. Nammālvār was born in a Śūdra family and till the age of sixteen would neither open his eyes nor mouth. Then one day Madhurakavi guided by a light came to the place where Nammālvār was sitting and awoke him from his trance by certain questions. Nammālvār experienced a revelation of Viṣṇu at the same time and thenceforth began to pour out verses in profusion.

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Madhurakavi became his disciple and has left only ten stanzas in praise of his Guru.

The Tiruvāymoli is very popular and is often quoted not only by Vaiṣṇavas but also by Smārtas in the South. It contains at least what approaches to be a philosophic conception of the Deity while the other Ālvārs just concentrate on the characterstics of the Lord in His different avatāras.

In one place Nammālvār says: "He is the material cause of substantial visible expanse, air, heat, water and earth. He is pervading them all. He, in the form of life, is pervading all bodies and in all places. At times He swallows all this up." [1]

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the writings of the Ālvārs have much in common and a description of the contents of the Nālāyiraprabandham will reveal what is known as the Bhāgavata dharma. An attempt has been made to show the close connection between the Nālāyiraprabandham and our Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

One characteristic of all the writings of the Ālvārs is the expression of their bhakti in vivid language. In fact the view that the bhakti of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is just that of the Ālvārs has great weight behind it. "A surging emotion produced by gazing on images of Kṛṣṇa, singing his praises, meditating on him, associating with other devotees, touching their bodies, serving them lovingly, talking with them of His wondrous doings and His graces" are just as much part of the Nālāyiraprabandham as that of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The Ālvārs gave themselves up completely in the ecstasy of emotion. They looked upon God as a father, mother, friend and every other conceivable human relation as is also found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Thus in the third skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the Lord Himself says about devotees "They who depend on Me, to whom I am the only object of love, the very self, the son, the friend, the preceptor, the kith and kin and the chosen deity etc." [2]

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1. Tiruvāymoli : C. 1. 1. 7.
2. .....येषामहं प्रिय आत्मा सुतश्च सखा गुरुः सुहृदो दैवमिष्टम् ॥

Bhā. P. III. 25. 38.

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Talking of bhaktas Nammālvār says : "It is impossible even for gods to know His real nature. He is beyond the beyond; but 'to Me He is of a definite nature.' 'He is easily accessible to His devotees. His ways are mysterious to others.' [1]

The same idea of the importance of bhaktas is expressed in many places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Thus when Viṣṇu as Narasiṁha had killed Hiraṇyakaśipu he was ferocious to look at. None of the gods dared to approach Him. Even Śrī was afraid to go near her Lord. Knowing the weakness of Hari for His devotees the gods asked Prahlāda to go near and appease Him. This Prahlāda did successfully and in that context it is said that "Wealth, pedigree, comeliness of form, asceticism, learning, keenness of the senses, splendour, glory, bodily strength, self-endeavour, intelligence and yoga are not sufficient for the propitiation of the Supreme person. For the Lord was pleased with the leader of a herd of elephants (gajendra) through mere devotion." [2] A bhakta is the most important person to the Lord. Thus addressing Durvāsas Śrī Hari tells him that "Devotees are My very heart while I am the very heart of the righteous. They do not cognize anything else (dearer) than Me nor do I know in the heart anyone else (dearer) than they." [3]

The six qualities which are mentioned in the Pāñcarātra system is alluded to by Nammālvār when he says : "In Him wisdom, strength, power, lordship, prowess and energetic splendour attain their perfection." [4] The Grace of the Deity is expressed by Nammālvār as follows : "He is the Lord Who does not cast out the undeserving nor does He take up only the deserving."

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1. Tiruvāymoli. C. 1. 3. 1.
2. मन्ये धनाभिजनरूपतपःश्रुतौजस्तेजःप्रभावबलपौरुषबुद्धियोगाः ।
   नाराधनाय हि भवन्ति परस्य पुंसो भक्त्या तुतोष भगवान् गजयूथपाय ॥
   Bhā. P. VII. 9. 9.
3. साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ।
   मदन्यत् ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥ Ibid. P. IX. 4. 68.
4. Tiruvāymoli. C. 1. 3. 10.

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The Bhāgavata Purāṇa repeatedly tells us that God is an embodiment of kindness and showers His blessings on His bhaktas at the first opportunity. In fact it is said that God is impatient to show his grace to his servants." [1]

While dealing with the different avatāras of Viṣṇu the Ālvārs identify themselves with various individuals connected with the Lord in His avatāras. Thus Nammālvār imagines himself as a gopī and is worried about Kṛṣṇa's danger at the hands of the demons. He sings : 'O my Lord, go not Thou to attend the cows. Many asuras set up by Kaṁsa take alluring forms and wander about in Thy meadows and entice Thee. If they succeed many evils will come upon Thee. I implore you to listen to me.' [2]

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across bhaktas who identify themselves with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and imitate His actions. Thus the gopīs of Vraja, when they found Kṛṣṇa missing, were so struck with agony that they lost themselves in contemplation of the Deity. The Purāṇa says, "The cowherd women who got very distracted in their quest for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and felt identified with Him actually imitated the various pastimes of the Lord." [3]

Kulaśekhara Ālvār is an example of a true bhakta who forgot everything else and spent his days in meditating on the Lord and in listening to His glory. This Ālvār was a king of Travancore (Kerala State) and though a capable ruler he was too much absorbed in his religion to conduct the affairs of the state satisfactorily. His religious fervour is illustrated by a few incidents in his life. On one occasion, it is said, that he was very much moved by hearing 'a passage read from the Rāmāyaṇa in which Rāma is pictured as standing alone against hosts of giants' and he ordered his troops to go and help Śrī Rāma. On another occasion he started for

1. अपीच्यदर्शनं शश्वत् सर्वलोकनमस्कृतम् ।
सन्तं वयसि कैशोरे भृत्यानुग्रहकातरम् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 28. 17.
2. Tiruvāymoli. C. 10. 3. 9.
3. इत्युन्मत्तवचोगोप्यः कृष्णान्वेषणकातराः ।
लीला भगवतस्तास्ता ह्यनुचक्रुस्तदात्मिका ॥ Bhā. P. X. 30. 14.

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Laṅkā with a view to rescue Sītā and plunged into the sea to swim across. But Śrī Rāma is said to have appeared before him with Sītā and told him that his help was not needed. Finally the king gave up his regal duties and went on a pilgrimage to different Vaiṣṇava temples. His work is known as the Perumāl Tirumoli consisting of 103 stanzas.

Periyālvār, like Vālmīki, is supposed to have broken into song in a moment of inspiration. His work is known as the Tiruppallāndu. He also wrote another book on the exploits of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is called the Tirumoli. Identifying himself with Yaśodā Periyālvār asks the moon to come and play with Kṛṣṇa. Thus : "My little one, precious to me like nectar, my blessing is calling thee pointing, pointing with his little hands. O Big Moon, if thou wishest to play with this little black one hide not thyself in the clouds, but come rejoicing." "He calls thee in his baby speech, prattle unformed, sweetened with nectar, from his pretty mouth. O Big Moon, if thou heedest him not, whose name is Śrīdhara, who is friendly to all, when he calls and calls't were well for thee if thou wert deaf." [1]

Besides dealing with the incarnations of Viṣṇu like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the Ālvārs dwell at great length on the many ways in which the Lord rescues His bhaktas. Thus in Tirumangai's Periya Tirumoli I. 2. 4 the poet alludes to the rescuing of Prahlāda by Viṣṇu, in V. 8. 3 he refers to the saving of the elephant from the crocodile's mouth, in V. 8. 4 and V. 8. 5 he describes the Lord as rescuing the snake Sumukha from Garuḍa and as protecting Mārkaṇḍeya from the noose of Yama, the king of death.

Another source of inspiration of the Ālvārs was the many images in the temples. They go into ecstasies by just gazing at them filled with the thought that the Deity is incarnate in these images. Tirumangai in Tirumālai V. 18 talks of the image at Śrīraṅgam :

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1. Periyālvār Tirumoli. I. 5. 2. Ibid. I. 5. 5.

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'O dewy tears of joy why screen my gaze
When hungry eyes of mine are feasting on
The matchless charms of Him, the lotus eyed
And carmine-mouthed so tempting sweet, reclined
On Ananta great.....'

The image is considered to be one of the five forms of manifestation of the Deity according to the Bhāgavata school. Thus the Deity present in the image and the worship to be offered to it are usually stressed in these texts. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is said "Sitting in a pure state of mind before the idol and purifying the body by the suppression of vital breaths and other such process he should adore Śrī Hari etc.," [1] Image and image-worship in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has been discussed in the next chapter of this work.

Āṇḍāl, the only woman among the Ālvārs, is traditionally believed to have been the daughter of Periyālvār found, like Sītā, in the earth while digging. She composed the poem known as the Tiruppāvai of thirty stanzas and devoted herself to the service of the Lord at Śrīraṅgam. Āṇḍāl loved to go to the temple very early in the morning in order to wake the Deity and offer Him flowers. Describing the efficacy of singing the Lord's glory Āṇḍāl in the Tiruppāvai says :

'If we sing the name of Him Supreme
Who measured the mighty world, we bathe
And say 'tis our vow, three rains each month
Will fall throughout the land and bring no harm.
While kayal fishes leap amid the great
Red swelling grain, and in the lily bud
The lovely bees shall slumber generous
Great cows shall flood the bowls with milk as soon
As we their udders press ; unfailing wealth
Shall fill the land. Ah ! Elorembavay ! (Tiruppāvai 3)

1. शुचिः सम्मुखमासीनः प्राणसंयमनादिभिः ।
पिण्डं विशोध्य संन्यासकृतरक्षोऽर्चयेद्धरिम् ॥
अर्चादौ हृदये चापि यथालब्धोपचारकैः ।
द्रव्यक्षित्यात्मलिङ्गानि निष्पाद्य प्रोक्ष्य चासनम् ॥
पाद्यादीनुपकल्प्याथ सन्निधाप्य समाहितः ।
हृदादिभिः कृतन्यासो मूलमन्त्रेण चार्चयेत् ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 3. 49-51.

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It is said that while Āṇḍāl's father was thinking about her marriage it was revealed to him by the Deity Himself that she was to be the bride of Śrī Raṅganātha (Viṣṇu as He is known at Śrīraṅgam). Āṇḍāl went to the temple and was absorbed into the Deity.

The love for the image is so great among the Ālvārs that the temple where the image is enshrined also comes in for a lot of praise. Thus Kulaśekhara Ālvār says 'rather than be a king in this world or in heaven, he would fain be a crane or a fish in the temple tank, a tree in the temple garden, a road upon the temple hill, a step at the threshold of the temple, or anything whatsoever so long as he is in the vicinity of the shrine. [1]

Tondaradippodi Ālvār is the later name of Vīra Nārāyaṇa and means 'the dust of the feet of the disciples of God'. It is said that Vīra Nārāyaṇa, a bhakta, once fell into the trap of a courtesan and was rescued from it by the God Raṅganātha Himself. He resumed his service to the Lord and gave himself the new name of Tondaradippodi. His two works are the Tirumālai and the Tiruppalli Yeluchi both in praise of the same deity Raṅganātha. Like Āṇḍāl Tondaradippodi calls on Raṅganātha to wake up and bless him who is waiting at the door of the shrine with flowers : [2]

".....pray awake, O Lord,
That sleep'st the sacred Kav'ri midst,
And haste to bless this worm, my puny self,
Who waits thy doors with loads of Tulsi wreaths."

Tirumangai was the last of the Ālvārs and he was born in the thief caste. His father being the commander of the armies of the Chola King, Tirumangai succeeded to his father's post. To begin with his name was Nīla and he was no Vaiṣṇava either. He fell in love with a heavenly nymph brought up by a Vaiṣṇava and her insistence on marrying only a true Vaiṣṇava led Nīla to become one. From that date he was known as Tirumangai. The nymph had insisted

1. Perumāl Tirumoli C. 4.
2. Tondaradipodi Ālvār Tiruppalli Yeluchi, 10.

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that Tirumangai should feed 1008 Vaiṣṇavas daily for one year. This he did by misappropriating the funds of the king. He was therefore made a prisoner but by god's grace managed to get out of prison. He continued the feeding of Vaiśṇavas and when short of funds resorted to highway robbery. He rebuilt and enlarged the Raṅganātha temple at Śrīraṅgam largely from money which was got by robbery. How did the Deity approve such sinful acts and grant Tirumangai His vision is a much discussed question. In fact some scholars have gone to the extent of denying any ethical or moral principle in the religion of the Ālvārs. But avoidance of sin and correct conduct were insisted upon as can be seen in their own songs. Nammālvār sings : "To leave off wicked deeds and the blackest sin and to be engaged in good deeds and to rise is to go to the grove where God resides." [1] Avoidance of sin, speaking the truth and leading a pure life in general have been insisted upon in the case of a true bhakta. Thus the Bhāgavata Purāṇa enumerates the qualities of a true bhakta as "to do one's allotted duty to the best of one's ability and to shirk from prohibited acts.....to practise non-violence, (in thought, word and deed) to speak the truth, to abstain from thieving, to limit one's possessions to the extent of one's barest needs, to abstain from sexual commerce, to practise austere penance etc." [2] The Tiruppāllāndu exhorts people to spread the name of Nārāyaṇa by means of good conduct. Āṇḍāl in Tiruppāvai "mentions austerities which lead to control of appetite and the abandoning of self-love and vain glory as necessary as well as good deeds and charity."

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1. Nammalvar Tiruvaimoli. C. II. 10. 4.
2. निषेवितेनानिमित्तेन स्वधर्मेण महीयसा ।
क्रियायोगेन शस्तेन नातिहिंस्रेण नित्यशः ॥
मद्विष्ण्यदर्शनस्पर्शपूजास्तुत्यभिवन्दनैः ।
भूतेषु मद्भावनया सत्त्वेनासंगमेन च ॥
महतां बहुमानेन दीनानामनुकम्पया ।
मैत्र्या चैवात्मतुल्येषु यमेन नियमेन च ॥
आध्यात्मिकानुश्रवणान्नामसंकीर्तनाच्च मे ।
आर्जवेनार्यसङ्गेन etc. Bhā. P. III. 29. 15–19.

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"Hearken ye happy dwellers in the world,
The deeds that we must do to keep our vow,
Singing the feet of Him, the Lord Supreme
.....Bathing at break of day,
Nor ghi nor milk we'll eat ; we will not paint
Our eyes with black ; flowers shall not deck our hair ;
No deeds unfit we'll do ; no evil words
We'll speak, but give kind alms and must with joy,
Upon this way."

Even Tirumangai in his Periya Tirumoli I. 1. 8 contrasts his life of sin before his transformation and his life after the attainment of the grace of God.

'Ācārya sought I none, the Vedas to con ;
On matters needing senses five
Their use alone I bent my mind. Hence wretch
I am, failed to be alive
T' the wisdom real. Intent but how to wreak
Full pains on all my fellowmen
That dwells this world, I roamed. Yet grace hath come
And stainless shine I now. So then
To mokṣa attain, I have caught that matchless name
Nārāyaṇa the universes claim."

What we infer from Tirumangai's remark is that he definitely feels a better man as a Vaiṣṇava than what he was before he became one. The only way in which Tirumangai's actions can be justified is that his end was good and he did not much care whether the means he was pursuing was also equally flawless. There are quite a few over-zealous people in all times who, while concentrating on the end in view, fail to gauge whether the means they adopt towards that end is good.

Tirumangai is the author of a number of works preserved in the Prabandham. They are the Periya Tirumoli, the Tirukurun Tāndaham, the Tirunedun Tāndaham, the Tiruverukutrirukkai, the Śiriya Tirumadal and the Periya Tirumadal.

That there is no distinction of class and creed in the eyes of God is clearly expressed by the Ālvārs. As in the

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Bhāgavata Purāṇa Tondaradippodi declares 'that even the lowest of the low, if they have devotion, are dearer to the Deity than men of high caste, deep in learning.

"O Thou, whose crown fresh tulsi fillets wreathe
Pretentious birth, but vain I ween to gain
Thy bliss, if bhakti weds it not. For Lord !
Dost not esteem Thou more those blessed souls
Who though human 'ty's lowest ranks inborn
Yet in rapturous affection sweet they feet
Close-set adore, than those the high born priests
Who though well-versed the Vedic lore the four,
Yet hearts set not on service high of Thee'."

(Tirumalai 39)

There is a similar utterance in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa where Prahlāda says that "I account a pariah who has dedicated his mind, speech, actions, wealth and life itself to Him far worthier than a brahman who is endowed with the twelve attributes but has turned away his face from the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu." [1]

Āṇdāl also in her Tiruppāvai describes the grace of the Lord as burning to ashes the sins of the bhakta. God's grace is boundless and is capable of lifting even the humblest and the most unworthy. But at the same time mokṣa is only possible when the grace of God is coupled with man's faith and effort. Whether sālvation comes solely through God's grace without any effort on the part of the individual or whether mukti is the result of human effort culminating in God's grace is a question not easy to decide from the hymns of the Ālvārs. And that is precisely why Vaiṣṇavism in the South has branched off into two schools—the Teṅgalai and the Vadagalai schools. The Teṅgalais are those who believe solely in God's grace, the individual waiting passively till the time God showers His blessings on him. This school is also known as the mārjāranyāya school i. e. the cat-school. In the

1. Bhā. P. VII. 9. 10. Quoted earlies in Chapter II.

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case of a baby cat the mother cat takes it around holding it in the mouth and the baby does not exert itself at all. So also the Teṅgalais assert that the individual need only to remain quiet till such time as salvation comes. The Vadagalais are also known as the markatanyāya school i. e. the monkey school. Here the young monkey has to cling on to its mother if it wants to be carried around. There is effort on the part of the baby monkey and the Vadagalais compare the baby monkey to the mumukṣu.

The philosophy of the Ālvārs is more or less that contained in the Pāñcarātra Samhitās, though the Vyūha theory and the cosmology of the Samhitās are not dealt by them. But the Ālvārs had no use for the elaborate cosmology or other paraphernalia ; their approach was direct to the Supreme with no intermediary Vyūha. They were only concerned with the Deity and themselves.

The successors of the Ālvārs were the Ācāryas among whom Rāmānuja was the most important. In fact Vaiṣṇavism in the South we can say, became rooted and took strength not because of the Ālvārs but because of the Ācāryas, Rāmānuja and Madhva. The Ācāryas were responsible for the spread of Vaiṣṇavism though the seed was already sown in the time of the Ālvārs. What was needed for the seed to sprout and grow was a systematic philosophy presentable to the scholars and bearing comparison with the other existing systems of thought of the day, chief of which was Śaṅkara's Advaita philosophy. Again the writings of the Ālvārs was in Tamil which did have a mass appeal but was not able to satisfy the learned sector. The Ācāryas were learned men who wrote in Sanskrit and at their hands the "intense religious experience of the Ālvārs received intellectual championship."

An account of the development of the Bhāgavata cult or Pāñcarātra system will not be complete unless the different Vaiṣṇava movements are mentioned. An attempt is therefore made to describe as briefly as possible the Vaiṣṇava movements of the land. The Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, as Rāmānuja's followers are denoted, form an important group of Vaiṣṇavas and their philosophy is known as the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy.

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Since we are concerned more with bhakti than anything else the bhakti aspect of Viśiṣṭādvaita alone is dealt with here. Rāmānuja's religion was Vaiṣṇavism advocating the worship of a personal God who was characterised by Love. Thus in Viśiṣṭādvaita devotion plays an important part in the salvation of the individual soul. According to this philosophy there are three eternal principles—the individual soul, the world and the Supreme Being. But both the individual soul and the world are attributes of the Supreme Deity and cannot exist by themselves. "They constitute His body and with the controlling inward Supreme soul constitute one entity called Brahman." The central idea is that God is the life of all life and the means for the attainment of eternal bliss is the path of bhakti. Rāmānuja defines bhakti as contemplation on God accompanied by love.[1] According to him bhakti is continuous, 'loving meditation on the beloved; the stream of the loving thought is unbroken like the stream of oil'.[2] Rāmānuja also uses bhakti in the sense of knowledge when he says in Śrī Bhāṣya III. 4. 26 :—"What we have to understand by knowledge in this connection is a mental energy different in character from the mere cognition of the sense of texts and more specifically denoted by such terms as dhyāna or upāsanā i. e. meditation which is of the nature of rememberance, but in intuitive clearness is not inferior to the clearest presentative thought (pratyakṣa) which by constant daily practice becomes even more perfect." "Steady remembrance of this kind is designated by the word devotion (bhakti) for this term has the same meaning as upāsana." (meditation).

The Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānuja insists on a seven-fold improvement of mind and body (sādhana saptaka) as a preliminary duty of the bhakta.[3] This seven-fold mārga consists of

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1. स्मर्यमाणविषयस्यात्यर्थप्रियत्वेन स्वयमप्यत्यर्थप्रियरूपं स्मृतिसंतानमेवोपासनशब्दवाच्यमिति हि निश्चीयते तदेव स्नेहपूर्वमनुध्यानं भक्तिरित्युच्यते बुधैरितिवचनात् ॥ Gīta Rāmānuja bhāṣya 7. 1. (उत्थानिका)
2. मयि तैलधारावदविच्छेदेन निविष्टमना भव । Ibid. 9. 34.
3. मनोमयः परिशुद्धेन मनसैकेन ग्राह्यो विवेकविमोकादिसाधनसप्तकानुगृहीतपरमात्मोपासननिर्मलीकृतेन मनसा गृह्यते ॥ Śrī Bhāṣya. I. 2. 2.

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physical and mental purity, performance of one's own duty, maintenance of equanimity in all conditions and practice of continuous meditation on God.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa also insists on certain qualities in the spiritual aspirant. Thus Kapila tells Devahūtī that this gospel of bhakti can be imparted only to a man full of reverence, a devotee, a meek soul, an uncavilling man, one who is friendly to all beings, who takes delight in service, one who has developed a distaste for external objects, a man who is serene of mind, one who is free from jealousy, one who is pure both within and without and above all to him who holds Me dearer than all."[1] The criterion or pātratva of a spiritual aspirant has been discussed right from Vedic times. In the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad for instance it is said that "This highest mysticism expounded in the Vedānta in a former age should not be taught to one whose passions have not been subdued, not to one who is not a worthy son, nor to an unworthy disciple."[2]

More than anything else it is important that the aspirant should know his own nature as distinct from the body and give up all bodily pursuits. In the Srī Bhāṣya III. 3. 52[3] it is said that "one must meditate on oneself as not only different from the body but as having qualities similar to Brahman." Thus in meditation the individual-self is to be conceived in the form that it should attain i.e. the pure form which it will obtain in release. The next step is to practise one's duty without any desire for personal gain (niṣkāma karma).

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1. श्रद्दधानाय भक्ताय विनीतायानसूयवे ।
भूतेषु कृतमैत्राय शुश्रूषाभिरताय च ॥
बहिर्जातविरागाय शान्तचित्ताय धीयताम् ।
निर्मत्सराय शुचये यस्याहं प्रेयसां प्रियः ॥ Bhā. P. III. 32. 41-42.
2. वेदान्ते परमं गुह्यं पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम् ।
नाऽप्रशान्ताय दातव्यं नाऽपुत्रायाशिष्याय वा पुनः ॥
यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥
प्रकाशन्ते महात्मन इति । Śvet Up. VI. 22-23.
3. व्यतिरेकस्तद्भावभावित्वान्न तूपलब्धिवत् ॥ Śrī Bhāṣya III. 3. 52.

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Duties according to Rāmānuja include the duties prescribed by the Śāstras for each varṇa and āśrama. [1] By knowing the true nature of the body and its relation to itself as also by performing one's duties disinterestedly the individual soul realizes its own nature as Ātman which is different from Prakṛti, and when prakṛti is removed the "real spiritual self is realized." Thus Karmayoga leads on to Jñāna yoga. But that is not all. The Supreme Being is characterised by love and it is whole-hearted devotion which appeals to Him more than other things. Moreover in self-realization the Jīva realizes its own spiritual essence and thus is selfcentred and "not God-centred." Bhakti yoga steps in here in order to shift "the centre from self-consciousness to God-consciousness." Rāmānuja in his Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya IX. 34. describes the requisites of a bhakta thus :—"Thus, then, in conclusion, thou shalt carry on all thy worldly duties required for thy bodily subsistence, and scriptural duties as if all was done to please me, ..., being actuated to do so by myself. Thou shalt ever in love be engaged in singing my praises, in my services, in bowings etc. Thou shalt contemplate that the universe is under my rule and guidance and subsists as essentially my appendage. Thou shalt ponder and reflect over the multitude of my lovable attributes. Occupying thyself daily thus, in devotion of the above mentioned description thou shalt reach Myself."

By following the above mentioned path, it is said, the soul sees God face to face. And Rāmānuja is of the opinion that it is this state of realization that is meant by the Upaniṣadic seers when they declare that 'he who knows Brahman obtains Release.'

Rāmānuja has a number of followers all over the country and they are divided into two sects—the Vadagalai and the Teṅgalai whose main distinction has been already mentioned above. The religious mark of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins on the forehead consists of two perpendicular lines made with white earth (connected at the bottom) with an yellow or red line

1. विहितत्वाच्चाश्रमकर्मापि । Ibid. III. 4. 32.

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in the middle made of turmeric powder mixed with lime if red. Even today orthodox Vaiṣṇavas mark themselves with the 'nāmam' as it is popularly known, though it is fast declining among the moderns.

Madhva or Ānandatīrtha

Vaiṣṇavism as preached by Madhva has a large support on the west coast of India and in the Karnātaka State. His system of thought is known as the Dvaita philosophy and it is directly based on the Bhāgavata dharma as described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

According to Madhva the Supreme Being possesses an infinite number of guṇas and is the Essential Truth. He is entirely different from the individual soul and the world. Brahman is independent and everything else is derived from It. God, Jīva and the world are eternally distinct but Jīva and the world though distinct are subordinate to God. Again there is an eternal distinction between God and the Jīva, between God and the inanimate world, between the Jīva and the inanimate world, between one Jīva and another and between one inanimate object and another.

Mokṣa can be achieved through devotion to the Supreme Being who is very often spoken of as Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa. Madhva considers jijñāsā as the only way to attain Brahman. Jijñāsā can be found only in those who are free from desire or other conceptions. Madhva calls freedom from all preconceptions as vairāgya. And the result of vairāgya, he says, is devotion to Viṣṇu which will ultimately lead one to mukti. But Madhva's idea of mukti differs from the Pāñcarātra conception of mokṣa in that he speaks of gradations even in mukti. According to him an individual can have only that much of ānanda or bliss "as is consistent with the degree of jijñāsā, he had initially." This finds partial support in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa which describes five different kinds of mukti i. e. sālokya, sāmīpya, sārūpya, sārṣti and sāyujya. Madhva also differs from the Pāñcarātra view when he classifies Jīvas into three categories, namely, Jīvas fit for attaining final bliss, Jīvas always going through the circle of

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existences and Jivas fit for the condition of darkness. This is rather harsh and one fails to understand why some jīvas should be condemned for ever without any hope of redemption.

The orthodox followers of Madhva have on their forehead two white perpendicular lines (joined at the bottom) with a dark line in the middle and a red spot in the centre.

Nimbārka

Nimbārka is another name in the history of Vaiṣṇavism in India. His followers are found all over North India and are quite numerous 'near Mathurā and in Bengal.'

Some scholars are of the opinion that Nimbārka was earlier in date to Rāmānuja. There is no definite proof of his date and he is placed both before and after Rāmānuja by different scholars. Śrī R. G. Bhandarkar is inclined to place him posterior to Rāmānuja. He is described as a Tailaṅga Brāhmaṇa of South India.

Nimbārka's system of thought can be called both 'monistic and pluralistic.' Thus firstly there is real difference between Brahman. on the one hand and cit and acit on the other. Here Brahman is understood as the cause of all things, as an Entity by Itself, Who dwells within the heart of the soul, who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Since the soul and matter (world) have none of the above said qualities they are both different from Brahman. But at the same time since Brahman is the cause of both the Jīva and the world Nimbārka argues that they are non-different as well as different from Him. "In essence the effect is the cause itself—so far it is identical with the cause; yet the effect has its own peculiar form, attributes and functions—so far it is different from the cause."[1] Because of this difference-non-difference argument Nimbārka's teaching is known as the Svābhāvika-bhedā-bhedavāda.

Nimbārka differs from other thinkers so far as the idea of Jīvanmukti is concerned. According to him there can be no salvation while living in the world because of the limitations

1. Cultural Heritage of India Vol. III. p. 340.

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of the physical body and is a state to be obtained only after death. And the path to mokṣa here is not only devotion or bhakti but also the performance of niṣkāma karma leading to knowledge and salvation. Nimbārka differs from Rāmānuja when he holds that upāsanā and bhakti are not identical. Whereas upāsanā denotes pure meditation on Brahman bhakti, he says, "implies a special kind of deep love for God" which arises in the heart of a man who has qualities like modesty. [1]

"In Nimbārka the Absolute of philosophy and the God of religion merge into one." The relation between man and God is that between 'the worshipper and the worshipped,' and this relationship is characterised by love, devotion and complete self-surrender. Nimbārka found in Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa the characteristic guṇas of the worshipper and the worshipped and hence propounded the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult. The Deity here is Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and the gopīs are the souls striving for salvation.

The orthodox followers of Nimbārka wear two perpendicular lines of Gopicandana on the forehead with a black spot in the middle.

Vallabhācārya

Vallabhācārya was another Tailaṅga Brāhmaṇa of South India who lived in the period 1473–1531 A. D. and preached that the gospel of bhakti was the only way to salvation.

According to Vallabha Śrī Kṛṣṇa, also called Puruṣottama, is the Highest Brahman and can be attained through bhakti. He believed in a two-fold bhakti called the Maryāda-bhakti and the puṣṭi-bhakti. In the maryāda bhakti one has to follow the injunctions in the Vedas and practise the different types of bhakti like Śravaṇa etc. till he begins to love God. But in the puṣṭi mārga love or bhakti is promoted by the grace of God Himself and these bhaktas love God most zealously and worship Him because of their love and not because He is the Paramātman. Gopījanavallabha is a term used very much in

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1. कृपास्य दैत्यादियुजि प्रजायते यया भवेत् प्रेमविशेषलक्षणा।
भक्तिर्ह्यनन्याधिपतेर्महात्मनः सा चोत्तमा साधनरूपिकापरा॥ Daśaślokī 29.

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this system and the aim of the devotee is to become as absorbed in the deity as the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. The gopīs are taken to be the pioneers in the field of puṣṭi mārga and every attempt is made to get into the spirit of the gopīs.

The fruit of devotion or mokṣa consists in being admitted to the eternal sports of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. Some bhaktas become gopas and gopīs while others assume the forms of cows, beasts, birds etc. and enjoy the company of Puruṣottama. These sports are like those that took place at Vṛndāvana when Śrī Kṛṣṇa incarnated himself in Vraja and Vṛndāvana in the Dvāpara age.

This system has a large following in Bombay, Gujarat, Rājputana and near Mathurā.

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism

Bhakti is as much connected with Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal as in other parts of the country. But what is peculiar to Bengal is the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult intimately connected with bhakti.

Inscriptions

As proved by inscriptions found in Bengal, Vaiṣṇavism was prevalent there during the Gupta period. In the Susunia Rock inscription of Candravarman the prince is depicted as a worshipper of Cakrasvāmin or Viṣṇu. Thus the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult of modern times seems to have been a later development. But by the eleventh century A. D. Kṛṣṇa's supremacy was established as proved by the Belava inscription of Bhojavarman where "mention is made of Śrī Kṛṣṇa not only as the Mahābhārata Sūtradhāra but also as the Gopīśatakelīkāra of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata". The Pāla kings, though Buddhists, were tolerant towards other religions and inscriptional evidence shows that some Viṣṇu temples were constructed in that period. By the 12th century A. D. the existence of a positive Vaiṣṇava faith is amply illustrated by Jayadeva's Gītagovinda.

Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, as it is today, owes a lot to Caitanya who lived in the period 1486-1534 A. D. The influence he had on the Vaiṣṇava movement is incredibly great; so much

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so that Caitanyaism and Vaiṣṇavism are synonymous in Bengal. The unique contribution of Caitanya to Vaiṣṇavism in general and Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in particular is the efficacy of Saṁkīrtana, or the singing of the Lord's name and glory in company.[1] Another feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism is the tāntric influence it reveals and the Vaiṣṇava treatises of Rūpa Gosvāmin, Jīva Gosvāmin and others of the Caitanya school abound in quotations from tāntric works. The conception of Rādhā as the Śakti of Kṛṣṇa is probably due to tāntric influence and Rūpa Gosvāmin goes to the extent of saying that Rādhā "is already established in the Tantra as the Hlādinī Mahāśakti of Kṛṣṇa".[2] Another peculiarity of the Bengal school is that it regards the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as the supreme authority and as the quintessence of all śāstras.

Caitanya ignored the ritualistic side of religion and he also condemned distinctions of caste and creed. According to him Kṛṣṇa was the highest God and the means to Him was bhakti and bhakti alone. Unlike Rāmānuja, Madhva and other Vaiṣṇava saints whose beliefs have come down to us in the books they wrote, Caitanya's teachings are recorded only in the works of his followers. The most important among his disciples were Rūpa, Sanātana, Jīva, Gopālabhaṭṭa and Raghunāthadāsa who were known as the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins. In fact Bengal Vaiṣṇavism is alone responsible for the reclamation of Vṛndāvana and the pioneers in this field were the five Vṛndāvana Gosvāmins. From what is preserved in the writings of these followers it is clear that the Bengal school believes in Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone as the most perfect God. Kṛṣṇa is not an avatāra of Viṣṇu here but is Bhagavān Himself or the most perfect God. Though not declared in so many words they

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1. Caitanya used to cry, laugh and shriek in religious ecstasy. Prahlāda is described in exactly the same way in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Thus the Bhāgavata describes him as :—
   क्वचिद् रुदति वैकुण्ठचिन्ताशबलचेतनः etc.
   Quoted earlier in Chapter IV.
2. शास्त्रेषु विश्रुता गुणैरतिवरीयसी श्रीराधा महाभावस्वरूपा सर्वशक्तिगरीयसी सा हि ह्लादिनी महाशक्तिः ॥ Bhaktirasāmṛta Sindhu.

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also believe that Caitanya like Kṛṣṇa is 'the Supreme deity of the creed'. In order to overcome the inconsistency of two Supreme deities they suppose that Kṛṣṇa descended on earth in the form of Caitanya. But here again there is a problem. Whereas traditionally Kṛṣṇa was supposed to be śyāmala in complexion Caitanya was fair and was called gaurāṅga. This is explained away by what is known as the 'dual incarnation' namely Kṛṣṇa assumed the fair form and the feelings of Rādhā in order to relish His own divine bliss by uniting in Himself 'the two incarnated forms of the Śakti and the Śaktimat'. This idea of 'dual incarnation' found its full development in later works such as the biography of Caitanya written by Kṛṣṇa-dāsakavirāja in the 17th century A. D. in Bengali.

Bhakti in the Caitanya school, is not an "austere concentration of the mind on absolute reality" but loving adoration of a personal god. Bhakti is also distinguished as vaidhī and rāgānugā. The first is developed according to śāstric rules and corresponds to the maryāda bhakti of Vallabha and the Sāttvika bhakti of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa but the second type is governed by no rules whatsoever but follows the natural inclination of the heart. The gopīs of Vṛndāvana are cited as examples of the Rāgānugā bhakti. The mutual love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is glorified in the Caitanya system and the aim throughout is to surrender the self up completely to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and forget oneself in the adoration of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the medium of saṅkīrtana.

The whole system centres round the Rādhā–Kṛṣṇa love which emphasizes the Madhura–bhāva of the bhakti rasa. Kṛṣṇa as a lover is more important here than Kṛṣṇa as a hero who slew numerous demons. The Kṛṣṇa of Vṛndāvana who is engaged in eternal sports with the gopīs is what really counts rather than the Kṛṣṇa of Kurukṣetra or again the Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā. In fact the erotic sentiment is given so much importance in the Bengal school that it has lent itself to severe criticism from scholars both occidental and oriental. But just as the phallus or liṅga of the Śaivas does not carry with it any immoral association so also the glorification of the erotic sentiment in the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school does not in any way

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reflect on the life of these saints. Caitanya himself stuck to an ascetic morality and preached it to others as well. But the system lends itself and permits also erotic contemplation; the stress on emotional experience allows the school to indulge in the "inward realization of the divine sports in all their erotic implications," and proclaims that state as the highest that man can achieve. But Caitanya foresaw the possibility of misusing his teachings and hence warned his followers against the romantic relationship between the sexes. "True love" he said "will dawn only when the hearts have risen above sexual cravings." Caitanya has left behind him only one work called the Śikṣāṣṭaka in which he repeatedly emphasizes the utterance of the divine name 'Kṛṣṇa' and longs for union with Him through intense devotion.[1]

The followers of Caitanya wear two white perpendicular lines on the forehead which is joined together at the bottom and a line continues up to the tip of the nose.

Besides Bengal the Caitanya cult has a large following in Orissa where Caitanya spent the major part of his life.

Apart from these teachers of various Vaiṣṇava sects there have been many bhaktas who made no attempt to preach any doctrine but whose bhakti itself, as expressed in their songs, has influenced later devotees. The subject matter of these songs are usually drawn from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Sūrdas

Such a bhakta was Sūrdas (1479–1584 A. D.) who was a native of Vraja, who was blind and who was forsaken by his parents and relatives. His only solace was his devotion to the Almighty and having learnt Sanskrit somehow he started composing songs. It is said that Vallabhācārya, while passing that way, met Sūrdas and accepted him as a disciple. Under Vallabhācārya's guidance he started singing the episodes

1. चेतो दर्पण-मार्जनं भव-महा-दावाग्नि-निर्वापणं
श्रेयः-कैरव-चंद्रिका-वितरणं विद्या-वधू जीवनम् ।
आनन्दाम्बुधिवर्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्णसङ्कीर्तनम् ॥
Quoted from Bankey Behari 'Minstrels of God' Part II Appendix

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of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His work is known all over the country as the Sūrsāgar which contains about eight thousand songs dealing, apart from prayers, with almost all topics mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. At one place Sūrdas prays—

"Whatever is destined by the Lord Gopāl
will come to pass, whatever may happen,
If one seeks by personal effort to change the
course of destiny—he is sadly mistaken,
Therefore wash away all faith in effort, mantras
and the like

Whatever Lord Nandnandan has inscribed
in your lot, there is none who can erase it.
Then why waste time pondering on good and evil
consequences of the deeds that may fall to your lot?
Believe me, says Sūrdas, God is kindness
incarnate, therefore let thy mind dwell on
His lotus feet." [1]

Gujarāt has been the birthplace of two great bhaktas—Nārsi Mehta and Mīrā Bai. These two were the pioneers of bhakti in Gujarāt; whereas Nārsi Mehta instilled bhakti in the life of the masses with whom he associated in singing hymns and in dancing with religious fervour, Mīrā Bai, a royal princess gave up all comforts and pleasures in the search for Giridhar and finally became one with Giridharji.

Nārsi Mehta

Nārsi Mehta, besides being a bhakta, was also the preacher of ethical and moral principles. He laid great stress on vairāgya as the first step to bhakti and it is said that when his wife and son died he remarked "Well it did happen that by His grace they passed away. I can now pursue my devotion to Gopāl without interruption." All these qualities are clearly expressed in the numerous songs he composed. One famous song was Gandhijī's favourite and it preaches the best qualities that a man should possess.

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1. Bankey Bihari 'Minstrels of God' part II. p. 299.

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"He is a Vaiṣṇava who feels for the suffering of another
And forgets the good that he does to another
never taking pride in it.
Who cares not for the praise and condemnation of
the world nor himself indulges in it.
He is not attached to women and wealth;
Such a one is praiseworthy and a jewel
to his family.
He is the same to all, is desireless and the
women of others he considers like unto his mother.
He never speaks falsehoods nor has he his
eye on another one's wealth
He is no slave of any passion or attachment
and the spirit of renunciation rules his mind.
His heart is fixed on the Lord whom he is
restless to meet, really his body is indeed a
pilgrim's garb.
He is neither avaricious, nor vile, nor a victim
to wrath and desire.
Says Narsi, verily he and his family shall cross
the cycle of rebirth." [1]

Mīra Bai

Mīra Bai was the princess of the royal house of Mewar and started worshipping and loving Kṛṣṇa as her husband at the early age of five. She was later married into the royal household of Chitor by the compulsion of elders. Her whole life is one of torture by her husband's people and her determination to stick to the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa against all odds. Thus in one of her songs Mīra sings—

"Pray ! bestow a kindly glance O Lord
So long has Mīra stood in supplication before Thee,

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1. Ibid. p. 309. वैष्णवजन तो तेने कहिये जे पीड पराई जाणे रे।
परदुःखे उपकार करे तोये मन अभिमान न आणे रे।
सकल लोक मां सहने वंदे निन्दा न करे केनी रे।
वाच काछ मन निश्चल राखे धन धन जननी तेनी रे।
समदृष्टि ने तृष्णा त्यागी परस्त्री जे ने मात रे॥ etc.

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Without seeing Thee, kind Lord. All my relations
Are turned enemies and are hard on me.
Who else but Thee can be my pilot and
Saviour as my boat labours amidst the troubled waters ?
I know no rest in the night nor comfort
in the day. I stand in agony.
The arrow of separation has struck my heart,
I cannot even for a moment forget its pain.
O Lord ! Ahalyā, though of stone, Thou
saved by a mere touch.
What weight doth Thou find in Mīra
who is so light
That Thou hesitateth to save her ?" [1]

Viṭhala

Mahārāṣṭra has been the birthplace of saints like Jñāneśvar, Tukārām and Nāmdev. All these saints were devotees of Viṭhoba or Viṭhala enshrined in Paṇḍhārpur. Viṭṭhal is believed to be a corruption of the word Viṣṇu and he is identified with Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu-Viṣtu-Vitthal). Puṇḍalīka is referred to as the originator of the Vitthal cult of devotion by Nāmdev and Tukārām. Kṛṣṇa is said to have come all the way down from Dvāraka in order to bless his devotee Puṇḍalīka. At Puṇḍalīka's request Śrī Kṛṣṇa decided to stay there for ever. All this probably points to the fact that Puṇḍalīka was the founder of Vaiṣṇavism in Mahārāṣṭra. The legend further says that Rukmiṇī was united to Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Paṇḍhārpur. This points to the importance given to Rukmiṇī rather than to Rādhā in Mahārāṣṭra. Viṭhala is known as Rukmiṇīpati or Rukmiṇīvara and not as Rādhāvallabha as in the Vallabhācārya and other systems. Rukmiṇī is known in Mahārāṣṭra as Rakhamai or Rakhamābai and is worshipped along with Viṭhoba.

Jñāneśvar, Nāmdev and Tukārām have been the three great leaders of Vaiṣṇavism in the Marātha country.

1. Bankey Behari Ibid. Part I. p. 178.

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Jñānes'var

Jñāneśvar (13th century A. D.) became famous through his work 'the Jñāneśvarī' which is a "paraphrase in Marathi verse of the Bhagavad Gītā." This work contains about 10,000 verses and since the time of Jñāneśvar has exerted great influence on the thought and language of the Marātthas.

Nāmdev

Nāmdev (end of 13th to 14th century A. D.) was a devoted worshipper of Viṭhoba. Legend has it that Nāmdev was converted from an evil life to the service of Vithoba. He has composed many abhangs or short lyrics and he wrote some songs in Hindi as well. Here is a translation of one of his abhangs—

"Whether I live or perish, yet
On Pandurang my faith is set.
Thy feet, Lord, I will ne'er forsake
To thee this solemn vow I make.
Thy holy name my lips shall tell;
Within my heart thy love shall dwell.
This Keśav, is thy Nāma's vow
O aid me to fulfil it, Thou." [1]

Tukārām

But the most popular Marātha Vaiṣṇava was Tukārām who lived in the 17th century A. D. He was a Śūdra and was born in a family which for at least seven generations before him was devoted to the worship of Viṭhoba. Tukārām composed about 4600 poems all in praise of Lord Viṭhoba. He denounced immorality and superstition. Thus—

"Honour, dishonour that men may pay
Bundle them up and throw them away
Where there is ever a steadfast mind
There thou the vision of God shalt find.
Whereso the fountains of peace abide
Stayed is the passage of time and tide.

1. Macnicol 'Psalms of Maratha Saints' p. 44.

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Calm thou the impulse that stirs thy breast;
Surely says Tuka, a small request." [1]

To Tukārām every man was as competent as any other man to be a bhakta and he condemns the practice of initiation through a guru. Thus in one abhanga he says—

"Do not degrade yourself by becoming a guru and taking disciples. This takes you down in the scale of spirituality. For if the Lord Nārāyaṇa dwells in all human hearts wherein lies the difference between thou and me ? As dwelleth the Lord Nārāyaṇa in me, so does He dwell in thee. Tukārām says, I do not say all this as guru but emphasize that such a relationship is fraught with danger, for it wrecks the concept of the one-ness and indivisibility of the one all-pervading Ātman. I say this because I am so ordered by the Lord. My words are like the falling of rain." [2]

But the major part of his songs, besides enumerating the different attributes of God, express the yearnings of a bhakta to see his God. Thus he sings—

"Sobs choke my throat; my eyes
Are wet with tears—
Still waiting for my Pandurang,
Till he appears.
So long cast off by Thee
My heart despairs.
Ah wither hast thou gone, absorbed
In other cares ?
So many tasks and cares
Are thine while I–
I am forgotten thus, alas,
And left to die" etc. etc.

"O Vithobai—my Mother ! O Vaiśvambhara the supporter of the world ! Thou destroyer of world bondage ! Thou Omnipresent One ! Where art thou detained ? Leave me not thus. Discard me not ! Reveal Thyself for distance is as naught with Thee." [3]

1. Ibid. p. 336.
2. Ibid, p. 83.
3. Bankey Bihari Ibid. Part II. p. 330.

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Devotees of the Rāmāvatāra of Viṣṇu

We have so far described only those Vaiṣṇavas who were devoted to the Kṛṣṇāvatāra or the Viṣṇu aspect of the Supreme Being. But the term Vaiṣṇava also includes those who are devoted to the Rāmāvatāra of Viṣṇu.

Rāmānanda

Notable among such Vaiṣṇavas was Rāmānanda who shifted the stress "from the philosophical and doctrinal to the moral and social aspects of life." Rāmānanda is believed to have been the disciple of Rāmānuja. His followers are known as the Rāmānandins and are found in large numbers in Uttar Pradesh. Vaiṣṇavism in general does not lay too much stress on castes but bhaktas like Rāmānuja made a distinction between the brāhmaṇas and others and prohibited intercaste dining. Rāmānanda on the other hand, followed the principle to the very letter and treated all the devotees of Viṣṇu in the same way. There were many types of men in his sect. Thus Kabīr a weaver, Rohidas a currier, Sena a barber were all Rāmānandins. Rāmānanda also introduced the "purer and chaste worship of Rāma and Sītā" as the ideal man and wife, instead of that of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

Kabīr

Kabīr, a Rāmānandin, was another famous Rāma bhakta. He was against the worship of images as such ; but he "allowed adoration to be paid to Viṣṇu or Rāma as names of one God." Kabīrdāsa is a household name in India and specially in North India where no bhakti sangeet is complete without one of Kabīr's bhajans in it.

Tulasīdāsa

Another Rāma bhakta was the famous Tulasīdāsa who wrote the great work 'Rāma caritamānasa.' Tulasīdāsa has a great following in the whole of North India and specially in Uttara Pradesh. He taught that Rāma is the Supreme God and bhakti towards Him will lead a man to eternal bliss. Another work of his is the Vinayapatrika which is a collection of prayers to Śrī Rāma.

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Thus we find Vaiṣṇavas who worship Rāma. But the more popular cult is the worship of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa has influenced the minds of the bhaktas greatly.

Where there are no regular records of bhaktas as in the Tamilland or in Mahārāṣtra there are temples dedicated to Viṣṇu and his various avatāras which only confirm the prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism in those parts.

Guruvāyūr temple and the Nārāyaṇīyam

Thus in Kerala there is a famous Kṛṣṇa temple at Guruvāyur which is considered one of the finest in the land. The idol, according to tradition, was brought to this place by Bṛhaspati (Guru) and Vāyu just before Dvāraka was submerged. The idol of Guruvāyūrappan has four arms and is very graceful. It is also supposed to be very powerful and worship offered to it with faith is said to cure persons affected with various diseases. Tradition has it that a Vaiṣṇava bhakta called Mepattur-Nārāyaṇabhattatiri was suffering from rhuematism. On the advice of a friend he went to Guruvāyūr and in front of the image summarised the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in hundred days composing ten ślokas a day. This work is called the "Nārāyaṇīyam" and is very popular in Kerala. The contents of the first nine skandhas of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa are given in the first 360 ślokas of the Nārāyaṇīyam. The tenth skandha which describes the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in detail has been dealt with copiously in the Nārāyaṇīyam. At the end of ten days, it is said, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared before Bhattatiri and cured him of his rhuematism. To this day Guruvāyūrappan draws large crowds of pilgrims.

Even in the north-east corner of India i.e. Assam, there are temples dedicated to Viṣṇu. In Gauhāti there is an ancient rock carved figure. It is now worshipped as Janārdhan Buddha but is reported to have been originally a Viṣṇu image. So also there is a temple at Śukleśvar in Assam and it contains a large seated image of Viṣṇu, but is now worshipped as an image of Janārdhan Buddha.

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On the northern bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Gauhati is the Aśvakrānta temple which signifies 'ascended by horses.' Tradition has it that Śrī Kṛṣṇa stopped here for some time when he had come to Prāgjyotiṣa to slay the asura Naraka. Many holes in the rocks near the river are explained as the marks left by the hoofs of Kṛṣṇa's horses and a natural depression in the rock is shown as the mark of one of Kṛṣṇa's feet. It is interesting to note that the devatā worshipped here "is an old carving of Anantaśaya."

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CHAPTER VII

Image Worship and Images in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The worship of images forms part of the Bhāgavata faith and one of the manifestations of Īśvara is given as the images in which He dwells and allows Himself to be worshipped by his devotees. Bhaktas who yearn for a glimpse of the deity want to keep His form ever present in their minds and an idol or image aids them in their efforts. But an image should not be mistaken as a mere piece of stone or metal. It is not the stone that a devotee worships. The devotee invokes his God to come and dwell in the image and God answers his prayers by manifesting Himself within the image. The devotee worships this manifestation of the Deity and not the mere stone or metal. It is a question of pure and simple faith which cannot be explained in terms of cold reason. Implicit faith in images of gods as manifestations of the Deity Himself has wrought wonders in the lives of so many saints like Mīra, Āṇḍāl, Tulasidāsa, Tukārām, Caitanya and others. The five modes of manifestation of the Deity are given in the Ahirbudhnya and other Pāñcarātra Samhitās as arcā, vibhava, vyūha, sūkṣma and antaryāmi. [1]

Reference to image worship in the Bhāgavata Purana

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Bhagavān Himself advocates the worship of Him through images and even describes the various materials out of which they are made. Thus He says : "There are eight images of mine. They are those made of stone, wood, metals, earth, sands and jewels; and there are those painted and conceived in the mind." [2]

The divine form

The images of God are given various forms according to the imagination of the human mind. The tendency of man

1. उपासकानुरोधेन भजते मूर्तिपञ्चकम् ।
तदर्चाविभवव्यूहसूक्ष्मान्तर्यामिसंज्ञितम् ॥
2. शैली दारुमयी लौही लेप्या लेख्या च सैकती ।
मनोमयी मणिमयी प्रतिमाष्टविधा स्मृता ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 27. 12.

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is to picture God in a human form which combines everything good and pure in it. As early as the Īśāvāsyopaniṣad we have a statement saying that He has a most benignant form. [1] The Muṇḍakopaniṣad describes the colour of the deity as that of gold. [2] The Chāndogyopaniṣad compares the eyes of the deity with lotuses. [3] Rāmānuja believed in a form of Brahma and states that scriptures "deny to the Supreme Brahma only those attributes and bodies which are the products of prakṛti and proclaim that He has supernatural attributes and form." [4]

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across a number of forms of Bhagavān Viṣṇu which reveal the types of images used by the devotees of the time.

Parīkṣit is described to have seen in his mother's womb Bhagavān Vāsudeva protecting him from the brahmāstra of Aśvatthāma. The Lord is described as most charming in appearance and swarthy of hue, clad in yellow robes that shone like lightning and wearing a brilliant diadem of gold. He had four long graceful arms, was adorned with pendants of refined gold, had bloodshot eyes and held in one of His hands a mace that shone like a fire brand even as He waved it in a circle again and again Himself revolving round the child all the time. [5]

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1. यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमम् । Īśa.Up. 16.
2. (a) यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णम् । Mund. Up. III. 1. 3.
   (b) तस्य हैतस्य रूपम् । Bṛ. Up. II. 3. 6.
3. तस्य यथा कप्यासं पुण्डरीकमेवमक्षिणी ॥ Chānd. Up. I. 6. 7.
4. (अप्राकृत) । परस्य ब्रह्मणः प्राकृतहेयगुणान् प्राकृतहेयदेहसंबन्धं तन्मूलकर्मवश्यतासंबन्धं च प्रतिषिध्य कल्याणगुणान् कल्याणरूपं च वदन्ति ।
   Śrī Bhāṣya on I. 1. 21.
5. मातुर्गर्भगतो वीरः स तदा भृगुनन्दन ।
   ददर्श पुरुषं कंचिद् दह्यमानोऽस्त्रतेजसा ॥
   अङ्गुष्ठमात्रममलं स्फुरत्पुरटमौलिनम् ।
   अपीच्यदर्शनं श्यामं तडिद्वाससमच्युतम् ॥
   श्रीमद्दीर्घचतुर्बाहुं तप्तकाञ्चनकुण्डलम् ।
   क्षतजाक्षं गदापाणिमात्मनः सर्वतोदिशम् ।
   परिभ्रमन्तमुल्काभां भ्रामयन्तं गदां मुहुः ॥ Bha. P. I. 12. 7-9.

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Names of the different images of Lord Viṣṇu

Viṣṇu is usually described as possessed of four arms and as holding the Śaṅkha, Cakra, Gadā and Padma in the four hands. In fact the order in which these four articles are distributed among the hands determine the name of the image which it represents. Thus Viṣṇu is called Mādhava, Keśava, Nārāyaṇa etc. according to the order of the four objects. There are twentyfour such names for Viṣṇu and it is worthy of note that the number of permutations of four things taken four at a time is twentyfour. The order usually observed while describing is from the upper right hand to the upper left hand, then the lower left hand and finally the lower right hand. The image of Viṣṇu which has the Śaṅkha, Cakra, Gadā and Padma arranged in the order given above is called Keśava. The Rūpamaṇḍana gives the twentyfour names of Viṣṇu and the corresponding arrangement of the four articles. T. A. Gopinath Rao gives the whole table in his Hindu Iconography, which is reproduced here.

S. No.	Mūrti	Upper Right Hand	Upper Left Hand	Lower Left Hand	Lower Right Hand
1.	Keśava	Śaṅkha	Cakra	Gadā	Padma
2.	Nārāyaṇa	Padma	Gadā	Cakra	Śaṅkha
3.	Mādhava	Cakra	Śaṅkha	Padma	Gadā
4.	Govinda	Gadā	Padma	Śaṅkha	Cakra
5.	Viṣṇu	Padma	Śaṅka	Cakra	Gadā
6.	Madhusūdana	Śaṅkha	Padma	Gadā	Cakra
7.	Trivikrama	Gadā	Cakra	Śaṅkha	Padma
8.	Vāmana	Cakra	Gadā	Padma	Śaṅkha
9.	Śrīdhara	Cakra	Gadā	Śaṅkha	Padma
10.	Hṛṣīkeśa	Cakra	Padma	Śaṅkha	Gadā
11.	Padmanābha	Padma	Cakra	Gadā	Śaṅkha
12.	Dāmodara	Śaṅkha	Gadā	Cakra	Padma
13.	Saṁkarṣaṇa	Śaṅkha	Padma	Cakra	Gadā
14.	Vāsudeva	Śaṅkha	Cakra	Padma	Gadā
15.	Pradyumna	Śaṅkha	Gadā	Padma	Cakra
16.	Aniruddha	Gadā	Śaṅkha	Padma	Cakra
17.	Purushottama	Padma	Śaṅkha	Gadā	Cakra
18.	Adhokṣaja	Gadā	Śaṅkha	Cakra	Padma

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S. No.	Mūrti	Upper Right Hand	Upper Left Hand	Lower Left Hand	Lower Right Hand
19.	Narasiṁha	Padma	Gadā	Śaṅkha	Cakra
20.	Acyuta	Padma	Cakra	Śaṅkha	Gadā
21.	Janārdana	Cakra	Śaṅkha	Gadā	Padma
22.	Upendra	Gadā	Cakra	Padma	Śaṅkha
23.	Hari	Cakra	Padma	Gadā	Śaṅkha
24.	Śrī Kṛṣṇa	Gadā	Padma	Cakra	Śaṅkha

These twentyfour varieties are mentioned as well as depicted in some temples. Thus in the famous Raṅganātha temple at Śrīraṅgam two pillars in front of the inner entrance are known as the caturvimśati pillars. As the name implies, on one of them there are sculptured the twentyfour mūrtis of Viṣṇu. So also in the well known Keśava temple at Belur in Mysore a beam in front of the sukhanāsi or vestibule contains the twentyfour mūrtis of Viṣṇu. There is a village called Panthia to the north of Māndhāta and here there is a ruined temple which contains a number of images of Viṣṇu. The standing figure is alike in all the images but the arrangement of the four symbols differs in each figure. The name of each image is given on the pedestal such as Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Viṣṇu and the like. There are seventeen such images there while the remaining seven are missing.

Ornaments of the images of Viṣṇu

The images of Viṣṇu are also ornamented but there is no rigid rule as to what the ornaments should be. The Bṛhat Samhitā of Varāhamihira says that the ornaments and clothing and beautification of the images should be worked out in accordance with the usage in the country in which the images are made. [1]

The images of Viṣṇu as given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa usually have a Kirīta on the head and are clothed in yellow robes. The arms are adorned with gold armlets and they also have earings. The neck of the image has the famous kaustubha gem hanging from it and a little above the left

1. देशानुरूपभूषणवेषालङ्कारमूर्तिभिः कार्या प्रतिमा लक्षणयुक्ता सन्निहिता वृद्धिदा भवति ।

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breast there is a golden streak which represents goddess Lakṣmī. The chest is adorned with a garland of flowers and there are ornaments about his waist and ankles.

The thumb-sized Brahman of the Upaniṣads and similar utterances in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The description of Kṛṣṇa as Parīkṣit saw him and which is given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa I. 12. 7–9 recalls the Upaniṣadic idea of the thumb-sized Brahman described in the Śvetāśvatara and other Upaniṣads. [1]

A very similar description is given in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa II. 2. 8–11. [2] One of the means of salvation is to fix one's mind on the "Lord with four arms, bearing severally a lotus, a discus, a conch and a mace and residing in the cavity of their heart within their own body in a form as big as a thumb in height....."

By the time of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa image worship had come to mean a great deal to the spiritual aspirant and he imagines the image of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu which he worships to represent the Brahman of the Upaniṣads. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Ambarīṣa is described as bathing the image of Viṣṇu and then worshipping Him as directed in the scriptures. [3] Again image worship is strongly recommended in the eleventh skandha of the Purāṇa wherein it is made very clear that the devotee worships not the image as such but the God in the image. The devotee thinks in gradual succession about the flowers, earth, Ātman and the idol (image). Then arranging the articles of worship in order, he invokes the

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1. अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिक्लृप्तो य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥
Śvet. Up. III. 13.

2. Bhāgavata Purāṇa II. 2. 8. Quoted earlier in chapter II.

3. महाभिषेकविधिना सर्वोपस्करसंपदा ।
अभिषिच्याम्बराकल्पैर्गन्धमाल्यार्हणादिभिः ॥
तद्गतान्तरभावेन पूजयामास केशवम् ।
ब्राह्मणांश्चमहाभागान् सिद्धार्थानपि भक्तितः ॥ Bhā. P. IX. 4. 31–32.

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God to the image, Who is already present in his mind due to prior meditation. He then worships the image.

Different types of images of Lord Viṣṇu

The image of Viṣṇu is usually represented in one of three attitudes i.e. standing, sitting or reclining. (sthānakamūrti, āsanamūrti and śayanamūrti). These three attitudes are further classified into the Yoga, bhoga, vīra and ābhicārika varieties. Thus there can be a yogasthānakamūrti, yogāsanamūrti and yogaśayanamūrti and so also with bhoga, vīra and ābhicārika. Again each one of these can be further classified into Uttama, madhyama and adhama i.e. superior, middling and inferior. So to give the same example we can have an uttama yogasthānakamūrti, a madhyama yogasthānakamūrti and an adhama yogasthānakamūrti and so on with the others. The Vaikhānasāgama, the Tantrasāra of Madhvācārya, the Śilparatna and other works give the characteristics of each different image in detail.

Vīrasthānakamūrti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa being concerned more with the image of Viṣṇu has concentrated on it and has not been very particular in conforming to the other details of each image. Thus the attendant deities have been omitted in more than one instance. But it must be observed that the broad principles are discernible throughout and in some places even details have not been forgotten. Thus in the fourth skandha the description of Viṣṇu tallies very nearly with that of Vīrasthānakamūrti. A Vīrasthānakamūrti of Viṣṇu carries the usual śaṅkha and cakra but no mention is made of what the other two hands carry. Surrounding the figure of Viṣṇu there are the images of Brahmā, Śiva, Bhṛgu, Mārkaṇḍeya, Kiśkindha, Sundara, Sanaka, Sanatkumāra, Sūrya and Candra. We do not know to whom Kiśkindha and Sundara refer here. Such an image of Viṣṇu is known as an uttamavīrasthānakamūrti. If the images of Kiśkindha, Sundara, Sanaka and Sanatkumāra are absent it will belong to the madhyama class. If again in addition to Kiśkindha etc. the

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images of Sūrya, Candra, Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya are also missing then it belongs to the adhama class.

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the description is given as: "Bhagavān Śrī Hari was perceived by all. He was accompanied by Brahmā, Śiva and other protectors of the world and was extolled by Gandharvas and hosts of Apsaras as well as by sages. Along with the Lord came a number of Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Daityas, Dānavas, Guhyakas and so on, the foremost attendants of Śrī Hari led by Sunanda and Nanda and devotees of the Lord like Kapila, Nārada and Dattātreya as well as masters of yoga like Sanaka and his three brothers."[1] Since the details are all mostly present here this image belongs to the uttama class of the Vīrasthānakamūrti. The description given in the eighth skandha [2] can also be termed a Vīrasthānakamūrti.

Yogāsanamūrti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Viṣṇu as a Yogāsanamūrti is described in the texts as a seated figure with four arms and possessed of a white complexion; on its head there should be jata makuta and the āsana should be padmāsana. The front hands should be in the yogamudra pose. The colour of the lower garment of the Deity should be yellow and that of the upper garment white. The image should have a yajñopavīta, kuṇḍalas in the

1. अन्वितो ब्रह्मशर्वाभ्यां लोकपालैः सहानुगैः।
उपगीयमानो गन्धर्वैर्मुनिभिश्चाप्सरोगणैः॥
सिद्धा विद्याधरा दैत्या दानवा गुह्यकादयः।
सुनन्दनन्दप्रमुखाः पार्षदप्रवरा हरेः॥
कपिलो नारदो दत्तो योगेशाः सनकादयः।
तमन्वीयुर्भागवता ये च तत्सेवनोत्सुकाः॥ Bhā. P. IV. 19. 4-6.

2. ...विरिञ्चो भगवान् दृष्ट्वा सह शर्वेण तां तनुम्।
खच्छां मरकतश्यामां कञ्जगर्भारुणेक्षणाम्॥
तप्तहेमावदातेन लसत्कौशेयवाससा।
प्रसन्नचारुसर्वाङ्गीं सुमुखीं सुन्दरभ्रुवम्॥
महामणिकिरीटेन केयूराभ्यां च भूषिताम्।
कर्णाभरणनिर्भातकपोलश्रीमुखाम्बुजाम्॥
काञ्चीकलापवलयहारनूपुरशोभिताम्।
कौस्तुभाभरणां लक्ष्मीं बिभ्रतीं वनमालिनीम्॥ Bhā. P. VIII. 6. 2-6.

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ears, keyūras on the arms and a hāra round the neck. To the north of the image there should be an image of Śiva sitting and to the south an image of Brahmā sitting. In the back there should be the figures of Candra, Sūrya, Sanaka and Sanatkumāra. On either side of the Viṣṇu image Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya or Mārkaṇḍeya and Bhūdevī have to be represented. Such an image belongs to the Uttama class of yogāsanamūrti. If the images of Candra, Sūrya, Sanaka and Sanatkumāra happen to be omitted then the image would belong to the madhyama class; it would belong to the adhama class if the images of Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya are also missing. If the Viṣṇu image and the other attendant images are sculptured as standing then it will be a yogasthānakamūrti.

In the third skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Bhagavān is described as seated all alone on the bank of the Sarasvatī. "Possessed of a brilliant swarthy form which is all Sattva, with reddish yet most gentle eyes, He could be easily distinguished by His four arms and the yellow silk on His person. Placing His lotus-like right foot on His left thigh He was reclining against a young Aśvattha tree and was full of joy even though He had renounced the pleasures of sense." [1] This image can be described as belonging to the adhama class of the yogāsanamūrti though the images of Śiva and Brahmā are wanting and the complexion is also given as swarthy. A very similar description is found in the eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa where it is said that the Lord sat down on the ground. He had a curl of hair on His breast, was blue in complexion and was effulgent like burning gold. He had silk raiments round the neck and waist and possessed extraordinary beauty. His smiling face was like a red lotus and He was adorned with dark locks of hair.

1. अद्राक्षमेकमासीनं विचिन्वन् दयितं पतिम् ।
श्रीनिकेतं सरस्वत्यां कृतकेतमकेतनम् ॥
श्यामावदातं विरजं प्रशान्तारुणलोचनम् ।
दोर्भिश्चतुर्भिर्विदितं पीतकौशाम्बरेण च ॥
वाम ऊरावधिश्रित्य दक्षिणाङ्घ्रिसरोरुहम् ।
अपाश्रिताश्वत्थमकृशं त्यक्तपिप्पलम् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 4. 6–8.

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His lotus eyes were beautiful and He wore earrings. He was also adorned with a waistband, the yajñopavīta, a crown, golden bracelets, armlets and a garland of pearls. He had the Kaustubha suspended on His breast and forest flowers around His neck. He had all His weapons around Him and sat down by placing His left foot upon His right thigh. [1] In this description also Śiva and Brahmā are absent and the complexion is given as dark blue. But in a broad sense both these images can be termed as Yogāsanamūrtis.

Some Yogamūrtis in the land

Yogamūrtis are found in temples throughout the country. Thus there is a Trikūṭācala temple (tripleshrined) at Belvadi in the Chikmagalur Taluk of Mysore. The three images here represent Veṇugopāla, Yoganarasiṃha and Vīranārāyaṇa. The Vīranārāyaṇa image is very beautiful and is more than eight feet high including the pedestal and the prabhā. The image is standing on a Padmāsana and hence is a Yogasthānakamūrti. There are two chauri bearers and also the two Devīs are sculptured. The two upper hands carry the gadā and the padma while the two lower ones are outstretched—the right hand in the kaṭakahasta pose and the left holding Vīra.-mudrā. The Prabhā contains makaras and the daśāvatāra images. The image is very graceful. [2] A Yogasthānakamūrti is found in stone in Mahābalipuram near Madras. To the right and left of the image are found the images of Bhṛgu and Mārkaṇḍeya resting on one knee. Above these images

1. विभ्रच्चतुर्भुजं रूपं भ्राजिष्णु प्रभया स्वया ।
दिशो वितिमिराः कुर्वन् विधूम इव पावकः ॥
श्रीवत्साङ्कं घनश्यामं तप्तहाटकवर्चसम् ।
कौशेयाम्बरयुग्मेन परिवीतं सुमङ्गलम् ॥
सुन्दरस्मितवक्त्राब्जं नीलकुन्तलमण्डितम् ।
पुण्डरीकाभिरामाक्षं स्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलम् ॥
कटिसूत्रब्रह्मसूत्रकिरीटकटकाङ्गदैः ।
हारनूपुरमुद्राभिः कौस्तुभेन विराजितम् ॥
वनमालापरीताङ्गं मूर्तिमद्भिर्निजायुधैः ।
कृत्वोरौ दक्षिणे पादमासीनं पङ्कजारुणम् ॥ Bhā. P. XI. 30, 28–32.

2. Mysore Archaeological Survey Report 1920.

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are found two dwarfs who are probably the Āyudha puruṣas relating to Cakra and Śaṅkha. The image of Viṣṇu has a crown and in one right hand has the cakra and in one of the left hands the śaṅkha. The other right hand is in the abhaya pose and the other left hand rests on the hip. The image has the yajñopavīta and a hāra round the neck. It has ornaments round the arms and wrists. Viṣṇu is seen standing on the Padmapīṭha. [1]

A Yogāsanamūrti of Viṣṇu is found in the Kalleśvara temple at Bagali in the Bellary district. The two front hands are in the yogamudra pose and the padma and gadā are sculptured on the right and left respectively. In the back hands are the Cakra and the Śaṅkha. The image is seated on the padmāsana in the yogāsana posture. It has various ornaments like a crown, earrings, armlets, bracelets, necklace and yajñopavīta. The ten avatāras are sculptured in the prabhā. [2]

Viṣṇu as Yogeśamūrti is found in the famous temple at Badrinath in the Himalayas. The temple is said to have been constructed by Śaṅkarācārya in the eighth century A. D. The image is reputed to have been acquired from the bottom of the river (Alakānandā) after Śaṅkara dived ten times into it.

Kesʹava in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

When the images described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa are studied from the point of view of the arrangement of the four articles in the four hands of Viṣṇu in comparison with the Rūpamaṇḍana list, it is found that Viṣṇu as Keśava figures largely in the Purāṇa. The order of the four articles has been assumed to be the same as that of the Rūpamaṇḍana as it is unlikely that the author of the Purāṇa would have been unacquainted with it. Keśava means one who possesses beautiful hair. Probably the Bhāgavata abounds in images of Keśava because here Kṛṣṇa as Gopī-Vallabha is important. Ladies are always fond of beautiful hair and the gopīs were just as feminine as other women.

1. Hindu Iconography by Gopinath Rao, Vol. I. Part. I.
2. Ibid.

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Viṣṇu as Keśava has the śaṅkha in the upper right hand, the cakra in the upper left hand, the gadā in the lower left hand and the lotus in the lower right hand according to the Rūpamaṇḍana.

In the third skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Viṣṇu is described as adorned with a crown and earrings and as holding the śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma in His hands. [1] Again in the fourth skandha Viṣṇu as Keśava is glorified as bearing the Śrīvatsa mark on his breast and holding a conch, discus, mace and a lotus in His four hands. [2] In the eighth skandha Viṣṇu as Keśava is described. [3] The same Keśava is extolled in the tenth skandha [4] and Bhāgavata Purāṇa XI. 14. 38–41 again recalls the Keśava aspect of Viṣṇu. Bhāgavata Purāṇa XI. 27. 38 ff. is another place where Keśava is praised.

The Kes'ava temple at Belūr

Among the temples dedicated to Keśava must be mentioned the Keśava temple at Belūr in Mysore. Owing to its sanctity this place is described as the modern earthly Vaikuṇṭha in later inscriptions. [5] The main temple of Keśava is surrounded by other temples dedicated to Kappe-Chennigarāya, the goddess Somanāyakī, Vīranārāyaṇa, the goddess Āṇḍāl, Narasiṃha, the Ālvārs, Rāmānuja, Vedāntadeśika and Manavālamāmuni. Though the image in the main temple is now known as Keśava, in an inscription found in the temple itself it is said that the Hoysala king Viṣṇuvardhana caused the temple to be erected and set up the God Vijaya Nārāyaṇa

1. स तं विरजमर्कांभं सितपद्मोत्पलस्रजम् ।
स्निग्धनीलालकव्रातवक्त्राब्जं विरजोऽम्बरम् ॥
किरीटिनं कुण्डलिनं शङ्खचक्रगदाधरम् ।
श्वेतोत्पलक्रीडनकं मनः स्पर्शस्मितेक्षणम् ॥
विन्यस्तचरणाम्भोजमंसदेशे गरुत्मतः ।
दृष्ट्वा खेऽवस्थितं वक्षःश्रियं कौस्तुभकन्धरम् ॥ Bhā. P. III. 21. 9–11.
2. Ibid. IV. 8. 45–49.
3. तस्याः प्रादुरभूत् तात भगवानादिपूरुषः ।
पीतवासाश्चतुर्बाहुः शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः ॥ Bhā. P. VIII. 17. 4.
4. Ibid. X. 14. 46 f.
5. अभिनवक्षोणी वैकुण्ठ ।

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in it in 1117 A. D. Tradition also attributes to Viṣṇuvardhana the consecration on the same occasion of four more images of Nārāyaṇa at Talkad, Melkote, Tonnur and Gadag. The image of Keśava is about six feet high with a halo and is standing on a pedestal about three feet high. The four hands of the image hold a śaṅkha, a cakra, a gadā and a padma. The prabhā has the ten avatāras of Viṣṇu sculptured on it. The image is very proportionate and very impressive. It is ornamented with the usual crown, earrings, armlets, bracelets, rings, necklaces and garlands, girdle, anklets and toe-rings. To the right of Keśava is an image of Bhūdevī and to the left that of Śrīdevī.

Eight armed Viṣṇu images in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Though normally Viṣṇu images have only four arms the description of Viṣṇu as having eight arms in a few places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa indicates that Viṣṇu images with eight arms were in vogue during that period. The number of hands of a deity are supposed to indicate the varied activities of the God in different directions. Thus when Viṣṇu is described as possessed of four arms it indicates His activities in the four directions North, East, West and South. When Viṣṇu is represented as having eight arms it denotes his activities in all the eight directions North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West and Northwest.

In the tenth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Puruṣottama or Bhagavān is described as possessing eight graceful arms extending up his knees.[1] In the fourth skandha Bhagavān Śrī Hari appears with eight arms that hold severally a conch, a lotus, a discus, an arrow, a bow, a mace, a sword and a shield.[2] In Bhāgavata Purāṇa IV. 30. 6. again His eight arms are mentioned. In the same way in VI. 4. 36 the eight arms of Bhagavān along with the eight articles they hold are mentioned. In VI. 8. 12 are mentioned Śrī Hari's eight arms

1. ददर्श तद्भोगसुखासनं विभुं महानुभावं पुरुषोत्तमोत्तमम् ।
···प्रलम्बचार्वष्टभुजं सकौस्तुभं श्रीवत्सलक्ष्मं वनमालया वृतम् ॥
Bhā. P. X. 89. 55–56.

2. Bhā. P. IV. 7. 18–20.

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and the eight articles are described as the conch, discus, shield, sword, mace, arrow, bow and noose. [1] Here the noose is mentioned in place of the lotus.

The Candrabhāga Nadī flows through Candravati in Jhalāwar, Rājputāna. On the banks of this river there are a number of temples and also a number of ruins of old temples. Among the figures collected at the ghat there is a fine eight armed statue of Viṣṇu with the heads of a man, a boar and a lion. In the four left hands are placed a quoit, a bow, a lotus and a shell; and in the three unbroken right hands are a sword, a club and some arrows. In one of the temples there is a three-headed and ten-armed statue of Viṣṇu, four and a half feet in height with a female figure four feet in height on each side.

Veṇugopāla in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Another image of Bhagavān described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is that of Veṇugopāla. In the tenth skandha Kṛṣṇa is described as wearing a head-dress made of peacock's tail, looking very graceful and charming, having his ears decorated with Karṇikāra flowers, clad in yellow garments, wearing a garland of heavenly flowers, playing on the flute surrounded by the cowherds and eulogised by them. This is the Veṇugopāla (Kṛṣṇa) who played at Goloka.[2] This same image of Veṇugopāla finds mention in many places in the tenth skandha. The Rāsa dance forms an important part of the tenth skandha and the Veṇunāda plays a great part in the Rāsa play. Thus the image of Veṇugopāla finds an apt place in the tenth skandha of the Purāṇa.

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1. ओं हरिर्विदध्यान्मम सर्वरक्षां न्यस्ताङ्घ्रिपद्मः पतगेन्द्रपृष्ठे ।
दरारिचर्मासिगदेषुचापपाशान् दधानोऽष्टगुणोऽष्टबाहुः ॥ Bhā. P. VI. 8. 12
2. कुसुमितवनराजिशुष्मिभृङ्गद्विजकुलघुष्टसरस्सरिन्महीध्रम् ।
मधुपतिरवगाह्य चारयन् गाः सहपशुपालबलश्चुकूज वेणुम् ॥
……बर्हापीडं नटवरवपुः कर्णयोः कर्णिकारं बिभ्रद्वासः कनककपिशं
वैजयन्तीं च मालाम् ।
रन्ध्रान् वेणोरधरसुधया पूरयन् गोपवृन्दैर्वृन्दारण्यं स्वपदरमणं प्राविशद्
गीतकीर्तिः ॥ Ibid. X. 21. 2-5.

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Some Veṇugopāla images in the land

Bhagavān as Veṇugopāla is very popular and is enshrined in many temples. In the Trikūṭācala temple at Belvadi, mentioned earlier, there is an image of Veṇugopāla about eight feet high including the pedestal and the prabhā. On both sides of the image are represented Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī and it is surrounded by cows, cowherds and gopīs. On the Prabhā are carved the Cakra, padma, gadā and śaṅkha. On the pedestal a figure of Garuḍa is carved. The image is very beautiful. [1]

In Somanāthapur at Mysore there is a Trikūṭācala temple called the Keśava temple. There is no image of Keśava in existence now. The images there now are those of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, Janārdana and Veṇugopāla. The image of Veṇugopāla is very well carved but the flute is broken. It is about six and a half feet high with the pedestal. The image stands crossing his legs and reclining against a tamāla tree while he plays on a long flute. To the right of the image at the bottom there is a small figure representing a cowherd. Many cows are pictured as eagerly listening to the flute.

In the Madana-Mohana temple at Bṛndāvana there is an image of Kṛṣṇa as Veṇugopāla.

Varāhāvatāra image in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Among the non-human incarnations, the boar incarnation seems to be the most worshipped one. In the third skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the boar incarnation is described as having a steel-like frame and possessed of a thick coat of stiff bristles. He had white tusks on the ends of which he lifted up the earth. "The Lord who was dark as a tamāla tree lifted the earth on the ends of His white tusks. [2] This des-

1. Mysore Archaeological Survey Report 1920.
2. उत्क्षिप्तवालः खचरः कठोरः सटा विधुन्वन् खररोमशत्वक् ।
खुराहताभ्रः सितदंष्ट्र ईक्षाज्योतिर्बभासे भगवान् महीध्रः ॥
स्वदंष्ट्रयोद्धृत्य महीं निमग्नां स उत्थितः संरुरुचे रसायाः ।
...तमालनीलं सितदन्तकोट्या क्ष्मामुत्क्षिपन्तं गजलीलयाङ्गम् ।
प्रज्ञाय बद्धाञ्जलयोऽनुवाकैर्विरिञ्चिमुख्या उपतस्थुरीशम् ॥
Bhā. P. III. 13. 27, 31–33.

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cription in the Purāṇa agrees mostly with the details of a Nṛvarāhamūrti given in the Śilparatna. According to the Śilparatna a Nṛvarāhamūrti should have in its hands the gadā and the padma and carry Bhūdevī on the tusk. One of its feet should rest on Ādiśeṣa and another on a tortoise. Or the goddess may be shown as seated upon the left elbow of the Varāha with a Nīlotpala flower in her hand. One of the two right hands of Varāha should be made to rest upon the hip. The image may be worked out wholly as a boar (unlike as in the Vaikhānasāgama which combines the face of a boar with the body of a man) with a thick snout, broad shoulder blades, long tusks and a big body covered with unturned bristles.

Some temples dedicated to the Varāhāvatāra

Temples dedicated to the Varāhāvatāra are scattered all over the country. The reason for the widespread worship of the Varāhāvatāra might be due to the fact that the worship of this avatāra of Viṣṇu formed an important part in the religion of the Guptas. There is a Varāha panel in Mahābalipuram. So also in Rajim, Raipur District (Madhya Pradesh) there is a stone Varāha. In Candravati, Jhalāwar (Rajputana) on the banks of the Chandrabhāga Nadī are ruins of old ghats and flights of steps. A number of broken statues are also lying there. On the principal ghat there are two modern temples dedicated to Caturbhuja and Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. There is also a temple dedicated to the Varāhāvatāra. It is an open temple about nine feet square. There are four pillars supporting a canopy under which is enshrined a statue of a boar three feet long and three feet high to the tip of the snout. The animal is represented as rescuing the earth personified as a female figure from the Nāgas of the sea "who are sculptured with human bodies and serpent tails twined together at the bottom of the ocean." To the north of the temple there is another image of Varāhāvatāra placed under a modern brick dome.

In Chhatarpur Bundelkhand at a place called Khajuraho there is a Caturbhuja temple and to the east of this

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temple is a small open temple containing a colossal statue of the Varāhāvatāra. The length of this is about eight feet nine inches and about five feet nine and a half inches high. It is represented as standing with the two left legs advanced. On the pedestal under the boar there is a long Nāga with his tail supporting the boar's tail and his head crushed by a seated human figure. Near the snake's head there are two feet of another human statue which was probably that of Bhūmidevī as there are traces of her hand on the boar's neck. The body and the legs of the boar are covered with small human figures.

Baghera in Jaipur, Rājputana, is considered to be the actual traditional scene of the Varāhāvatāra. Baghera is supposed to be a corruption or partial transposition of Varāha. To the north of Baghera there is a large artificial tank called the Varāha sāgara. Here there was an ancient temple dedicated to the Varāhāvatāra and which was destroyed by Aurangazeb. Since then a large new temple has been built and it contains a huge image of Varāha about three to four feet in length and it has a small human figure on the top of it. It is interesting to note that numerous ancient coins found at Baghera have the figure of the Varāhāvatāra on the obverse and the legend *'Śrī Madādivarāha'* on the reverse in characters of the seventh or eighth century.

In Eran in Sagar district (Madhya Pradesh) there is a huge Varāha image which is about fifteen and a half feet long, ten feet ten inches high and whose hump is itself six inches high. This is supposed to be the oldest known Vaiṣṇava statue in India. On the underside of the neck of the Varāha there is a Vaiṣṇava inscription which has been mentioned in connection with inscriptions.

In the village Bilhari of the district Jubbulpore there is a Viṣṇu Varāha temple which looks like a recent building. [1] In Māndhāta there is an interesting collection of the different images of Viṣṇu. There is an image of the Varāhāvatāra inside a broken old temple called "Chaubīs Avatār kā Mandir." In

1. Archaeological Survey (Eastern Circle).

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Majholi there is a Viṣṇu Varāha temple which contains an exceptionally fine boar incarnation of Viṣṇu.

There is a Varāha image in the Viṣṇu temple at Nāgalapuram in the North Arcot District in Madras. It is shown as standing on the right leg firmly set on the pedestal, the left leg is bent and is supported on the hood of Śeṣa; the two upper hands carry the śaṅkha and cakra; the lower left is thrown round the Devī so as to support her in the seated position and the lower right hand is in the abhaya position.

Mention of pilgrim centres in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions some important centres of pilgrimage which are sacred to Bhagavān Śrī Hari.[1] Among them are the Veṅkateśa temple at Tirupati denoted here as Veṅkaṭa hill. In the famous Tamil epic the Śilappadikāram the Tirupati hill is known as the Veṅgaṭa hill. Other important places mentioned are Gayā, the Bhīmarathī river in whose bed is the famous Viṭhoba temple, Kañchi, Śrīraṅgam, Prayāga, Gokarṇa, Southern Mathurā and Prabhāsa.

Veṅkaṭeśa at Tirupati

The God Veṅkaṭeśa whose temple is situated at the top of the Tirupati hill is known in North India by the name of Bālāji. Veṅkaṭeśa is claimed by both Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas as their God. And there are people who think that the temple was originally a Devī temple converted into a Vaiṣṇava one at some later date. In Rāmānuja's days the Śaivas threatened to take possession of it but Rāmānuja eventually succeeded in retaining it for the Vaiṣṇavas. One of the early Śrī Vaiṣṇavas described the deity as Harihara due to the duplicate nature of the deity and the image is known as Harihara to this day. The right half of the deity is that of Hara and the left half is that of Hari. On the right forearm is to be seen the Bhujaṅgavalaya which is characteristic of Śiva. Otherwise the image is a standing one with four hands, the back two of which carry the śaṅkha and the cakra; the other right hand

1. Bhā. P., X. 79. 9–21.

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is held in the abhaya pose and the remaining left hand rests on the hip. But Veṅkaṭeśa as the god of the Vaiṣṇavas has come to stay as there are certain positive evidences for it. The Tamil epic Śilappadikāram describes the deity as Viṣṇu and all the inscriptions found on the walls of the temple declare it to be a Vaiṣṇava shrine.

Viṣṇupāda at Gayā

Gayā is a place adorned with many temples among which the Viṣṇupāda is the most important. The principal object of worship in Gayā is the Viṣṇupāda i.e. the footprint of Viṣṇu "enclosed by a silver-plated octagonal parapet," and it is on this footprint that every performer of śrāddha has to offer piṇḍas. This footprint is supposed to have been made by Viṣṇu when he trod down the asura Gaya. There is a Lakṣmī-nārāyaṇa temple near the Viṣṇupāda erected by Ahalyābai. This enshrines an image of Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī standing to the right, and the founder of the temple seated to the left.

Another sacred place where the foot-print of Viṣṇu is worshipped is Haridvāra. Here there is a temple called Nārāyaṇaśila.

Viṭhobā at Paṇḍharpur

The most famous Viṣṇu temple of Western India is that of Pandarinātha or Viṭhobā. It is in the bed of the river Bhīmarathī. Viṭhobā is said to have come originally from Dvāraka on a visit to a certain youth Puṇḍalīka who constrained the god to take up his abode there. The image of Viṭhobā is about three feet high and is made of stone. It is a standing image with two hands resting on the hips and with the feet fixed firmly on the floor. The head is adorned with a crown and some are of the opinion that there is a liṅga mark on it. Next to the image of Viṭhobā is that of his goddess Rukmābāyi. The present temple of Viṭhobā is a recent one. Between the present temple and the river is a portion of an old temple converted into a police station. Upon one of the pillars here is a Sanskrit inscription recording the fact that a "subordinate chief Keśavamaṇḍalika performed

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the Aptoryama sacrifice in the temple of Pāṇḍuraṅga Viṭhala on the banks of the Bhīmarathī in 1270 A. D." This shows that this was the original temple of Viṭhobā.

In the Hoskote village of Bangalore district there is a temple of Viṭhobā built in 1740 A. D. In the main cell the image of Viṭhobā carved out of black stone stands with the hands akimbo, with the images of his consorts standing on either side.

Kurukṣetra

Another centre of pilgrimage described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is Kurukṣetra. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, the Pāṇḍavas and others are all said to have gone to Kurukṣetra on the occasion of a total eclipse of the sun. [1]

Raṅganātha at S'rīraṅgam

Śrīraṅgam is famous for the Raṅganātha temple where Viṣṇu is represented as lying reclined on the serpent Śeṣa. Near the image of Viṣṇu is that of sage Gautama which is kept near the feet of the God. The figure of goddess Kaverī with a lotus in one hand is also placed at the feet of the image.

Viṣṇu reclining on the serpent bed is a very popular image and is worshipped in many parts of the country. There is an image of Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu in the Ānandapadmanābhaswamy temple at Trivandrum made out of ivory and another of stone in Mahābalipuram.

At Deogarh in the Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh there is a ruined temple of Viṣṇu. Here Viṣṇu is seen lying on the serpent Śeṣa with the head directed to the right of the observer. The upper half of the body is somewhat raised and the lower

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1. अथैकदा द्वारवत्यां वसतो रामकृष्णयोः।
सूर्योपरागः सुमहानासीत् कल्पक्षये यथा॥
तं ज्ञात्वा मनुजा राजन् पुरस्तादेव सर्वतः।
समन्तपञ्चकं क्षेत्रं ययुः श्रेयो विधित्सया॥
...मत्स्योशीनरकौसल्यविदर्भकुरुसृञ्जयान्।
काम्बोजकैकयान् मद्रान् कुन्तीनानर्तकेरलान्।

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half lies flat on the serpent-bed; "the whole body has the outline of a bow which is described in the Āgamas as appropriate to the reclining images of Viṣṇu." One of the left hands supports the head while the other rests on the bed; one of the right hands is held in the abhaya (kataka) pose and the other is stretched out parallel to the body and resting on the thigh. The image has all the usual ornaments such as the kirīṭa, kuṇḍala, hāra, keyūra, kaṭaka and vanamāla. Brahmā is sculptured as seated in the middle of the lotus issuing from the navel of Viṣṇu. To the right of Brahmā is Indra on the elephant Irāvata; to the right of Indra appears Subrahmaṇya on his peacock. Śiva is also sculptured seated on his bull and accompanied by Pārvatī. The left leg of Viṣṇu rests on the lap of Bhūmidevī who is shown as holding his right foot. By her side are the two Āyudhapuruṣas representing the Gadā and the Dhanus. Below the seat there are the figures of Lakṣmī and of the Āyudha puruṣas as representing the cakra, śaṅkha and khaḍga, the last of whom is shown as attacking the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

There is another image of Viṣṇu reclining at Rājputāna. Here the image has four arms, the right one of which is held in the jñāna-mudrā pose over the chest. Another right hand which is broken 'appears to have been kept near the kirīṭa as if supporting it. The front left hand is stretched out and made to rest upon the thigh while the back left hand which is broken seems to have been held in the kaṭaka pose.' The whole figure resembles the outline of a bow. The right leg is stretched out on the lap of Bhūmidevī while the left leg is bent and rests on the serpent bed. The image of Viṣṇu is adorned with the usual ornaments and a lotus issues from the navel. Near the head of Viṣṇu and to the right of it are seen four figures probably representing the sages Sanaka, Sanatkumāra and others. On the left and near the feet of Viṣṇu there appear the Saptarṣis and the five Āyudhapuruṣas. Below are seen a number of figures engaged in fighting, probably representing the devāsurayuddha.

In Dhamnar (Madhya Pradesh) there are some Brāhmanical rock temples and one of them contains a statue of Viṣṇu

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lying on Śeṣa. The image is four-armed and the crowned head rests on the right hand. The left knee of the image is shown as bent. A lotus issues from the navel and Brahmā is sculptured as springing from the lotus. At the feet of the deity are pictured both Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

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CHAPTER VIII

Some striking social customs described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Marriage and the custom of Sutee

On reading the Bhāgavata Purāna one feels that polygamy was not unusual and in fact was the rule of the day. [1] Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the hero deified, to whose glorification the Purāṇa dedicates itself, was himself a polygamist. Though the sixteen thousand consorts mentioned in connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name is an exaggeration, it is usually granted that he did have eight principal wives beginning with Rukmiṇī. [2] Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva was also a polygamist. Though the custom of taking more than one wife was prevalent one feels that the society realized the difficulties of polygamy and voiced its disapproval when the occasion arose. Thus for instance in the eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the man attacked by the various senses is compared to the state of a householder shattered by having many wives. It says "as many wives shatter a householder so does the tongue attract it on one side, thirst on the other, skin, belly, ears, nose, the fickle eyes and energies of action in various other sides." [3]

Polyandry

The system of polyandry or one woman married to more than one man is also found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. [4] In

1. तस्य भार्यासहस्राणां सहस्राणि दशाभवन् etc. Bhāgavata Purāṇa VI. 14. 11. Also Ibid. VII. 2. 31; VII. 9. 40; IX. 6. 26–27; IX. 20. 34–35; X. 56. 36 f.
2. या वीर्यशुल्केन हृताः स्वयंवरे प्रमथ्य चैद्यप्रमुखान् हि शुष्मिणः।
प्रद्युम्नसाम्बाम्बसुतादयोऽपरा याश्चाहृता भौमवधे सहस्रशः॥ Ibid. I. 10. 29.
3. जिह्वैकतोऽमुमपकर्षति कर्हि तर्षा शिश्नोऽन्यतस्त्वगुदरं श्रवणं कुतश्चित्।
घ्राणोऽन्यतश्चपलदृक् क्व च कर्मशक्तिर्बह्व्यः सपत्न्य इव गेहपतिं लुनन्ति॥
Ibid. XI. 9. 27.
4. Ibid. IV. 30. 16; VI. 3. 16.

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the fourth and the sixth skandhas the ten Pracetas are mentioned as marrying the daughter of Prāmloca. That the system is not much approved of is borne out by the fact that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa justifies the marriage because Bhagavān Himself advised the Pracetas to do so. The marriage of Draupadī with the Pāṇḍavas is another instance of polyandry.

Brides were grown up girls

From the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is quite clear that the brides were grown up girls fit for consummation on the day of marriage. The marriages between Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta, Subhadrā and Arjuna as also between Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa are all instances where the maiden marries the man of her own free choice. So also the Svayamvara system [1] found mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa presumes the maiden to be of an age when she can select her choice out of many suitors for her hand. That Uttarā, the wife of Abhimanyu, gave birth to Parīkṣit [2] just a few months after the Mahābhārata war points to the same conclusion, since she was married only a few months before the war.

Rākṣasa marriage in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Among the eight forms of marriages mentioned by the law makers [3] the Rākṣasa form figures prominently in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. "The forcible abduction of a maiden from her home while she cries out and weeps after (her kinsmen) have been slain or wounded and (their houses) broken open is called the Rākṣasa marriage." In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is specially mentioned that Śrī Kṣṇa married Rukmiṇī according to the Rākṣasa mode of marriage. [4] But in this marriage Śrī Kṛṣṇa carried away Rukmiṇī with her consent and not forcibly. Hence this is a combination of the Rākṣasa and Gāndharva forms of marriages. The marriage

1. Bhā. P. III. 22. 10; IX. 20. 15-16.
2. Ibid. I. 12. 11-12.
3. Manu Smṛti III. 27-37; Yaj. Smr. I. 58.
4. भगवान् भीष्मकसुतां रुक्मिणीं रुचिराननाम्।
राक्षसेन विधानेन उपयेम इति श्रुतम्॥ Bhā. P. X. 52. 18.

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of Kṛṣṇa with Mitravinda was also another instance of the Rākṣasa mode.[1] Arjuna's abduction of Subhadrā and his marriage with her later is again Rākṣasa.[2] But some verses in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa reveal that the Rākṣasa form was slowly becoming unpopular. Thus in Bhāgavata Purāṇa X. 54. 18[3] this type of marriage is belittled and condemned when it says that "being unable to bear the Rākṣasa system of marriage of his sister, Rukmi, the brother of Rukmiṇī, ever inimical towards Kṛṣṇa, pursued him with an Akṣouhiṇī of soldiers placing an arrow on his bow." It is interesting to observe the marriage custom of the people of the Punjab in this connection. The bridegroom goes on horse-back, accompanied only by his male relatives, to the bride's place. The garlands hanging from his headdress cover his face practically and the bride is also veiled. Even the mother of the bridegroom does not accompany her son which shows that there was no place for women there. This type of marriage seems to be a relic of the old Rākṣasa form. The male members connected with the bridegroom were a necessity as they helped the groom in snatching the girl away and warding off the relatives of the bride if they put up a fight.

Brāhma marriage in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The Brāhma form of marriage consists in the gift of a daughter by the father, after decking her with ornaments, to a man learned in the Vedas and of good character whom the bride's father himself invites. In the Mahābhārata the Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa and Prājāpatya forms are said to be permissible for the brāhmaṇas. In the Bhāgavata Purāna also, the Brāhma form of marriage is very often mentioned in connection with brāhmaṇas. Thus the sage Kardama is described as marrying Devahūtī according to the Brāhma rite.[4]

1. राजादिदेव्यास्तनयां मित्रविन्दां पितृष्वसुः।
प्रसह्य हृतवान् कृष्णो राजन् राज्ञां प्रपश्यताम् ॥ Ibid. X. 58. 31.
2. Ibid. X. 86. 8–9.
3. रुक्मी तु राक्षसोद्वाहं कृष्णद्विडसहन् स्वसुः।
पृष्ठतोऽन्वगमत् कृष्णमक्षौहिण्या वृतो बली ॥
4. वाढमुद्वोढुकामो ·····आवयोरनुरूपोऽसावाद्यो वैवाहिको विधिः ॥
Bhā. P. III. 22. 15.

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Gāndharva marriage in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Love marriage or marriage according to the Gāndharva rite is fairly common in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In this marriage the only condition required is the mutual love of the bride and the bridegroom. According to Vatsyāyana this Gāndharva form is the most respected form of marriage because firstly it is founded on mutual love and secondly because love is the be all and end all of marriage; it is also free from formalities and much trouble. [1]

The marriage of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā is an example of this kind of union. Talking of Duṣyanta when he saw Śakuntalā for the first time the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says, "the king instantly fell in love with her and stricken with love he questioned her in soft words." [2] Though the forgetting of Śakuntalā later by Duṣyanta questions how far his love for her was real or just a momentary passion, the fact remains that the marriage was a Gāndharva one when it took place. Kālidāsa has condemned such love marriages in his Abhijñāna Śakuntala. [3] Another love marriage described at length in the Purāṇa is that of Urvaśī and Purūrava. It is interesting to note that very often love was at the root of intercaste marriages like Pratiloma and Anuloma. Thus the marriage of Devayānī and Yayāti was due to love and so was the union between Bhīmasena and Hidimbā. [4]

Yet again love was the cause of quite a few cousin marriages or even "incest" that we come across in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Brother-sister marriage in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

In the fourth skandha of the Purāṇa there is a description of the projeny of Svāyambhuva's daughters. One of the

1. 'व्यूढानां हि विवाहानां अनुरागः फलं यत……" "……अनुरागात्मकत्वाच्च गान्धर्वः प्रवरो मतः" "सुखत्वादबहुक्लेशात्" Kāmasūtra.
2. Bhā, P. IX. 20. 8–10.
3. शार्ङ्गरवः—इत्थमात्मकृतमप्रतिहतं चापलं दहति। अतः परीक्ष्य कर्तव्यं विशेषात् सङ्गतं रहः। अज्ञातहृदयेष्वेवं वैरीभवति सौहृदम्॥
Abhijñāna Śākuntalam V. 24.
4. Bhāgavata Purāṇa. IX. 18. 20–23.

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daughters called Ākūti was married to Ruci and begot twins, a male and a female called Yajña and Dakṣiṇā respectively. Now we come to the strange part. It is said that Yajña married Dakṣiṇā. It is a love marriage since it is mentioned that Lord Yajña married Dakṣinā since she longed for him. [1] (Kāmayānām).

The author tries to justify this unusual marriage by mentioning that Lord Yajña was Bhagavān Himself, no other than Lord Viṣṇu who takes the form of sacrifice. And Dakṣiṇā is described as a part manifestation of Lakṣmī and hence inseparable from Lord Viṣṇu. [2] But no amount of justification will remove the fact that Yajña and Dakṣiṇā were brother and sister of the same blood i.e. sagotra. Sagotra marriages are prohibited according to ancient Hindu Law (though valid according to the new Hindu Code). But according to the text Yajña and Dakṣiṇā were not sagotra since Ākūtī was treated as a putrikā by Manu Svāyambhuva. A putrikā is a daughter married on the understanding that her first male issue would be taken in adoption by her father if he had not male issue. [3] In this case Manu did have two sons Priyavrata and Uttānapāda but with the consent of his wife he made his daughter a Putrikā. Thus Yajña belonged to Manu's gotra whereas Dakṣiṇā was of Ruci's gotra. Though the sagotra objection is thus void the blood relation of brother and sister still stands and is hard to reconcile.

Anthropology students may be of the opinion that in the earliest stages of primitive life incest was practised; but it must have been a very, very remote past. Even among hilly tribes who are untouched by civilization and who stay happy in their unit this marriage is viewed with horror. The Nāgās of the Assam hills are much in the news these days and have progressed a lot from what they were in the thirties or even

1. तां कामयानां भगवानुवाह यज्ञेषां पतिः ।
तुष्टायां तोषमापन्नोऽजनयद् द्वादशात्मजान् ॥ Ibid. IV. 1. 6.
2. यस्तयोः पुरुषः साक्षाद्विष्णुर्यज्ञस्वरूपधृक् ।
या स्त्री सा दक्षिणा भूतेरंशभूतानपायिनी ॥ Ibid. IV. 1. 4.
3. Manu Smṛ. IX. 127.

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forties of this century. Writing about "The Naked Nāgas" Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf says that the young men of a village were all housed in what are known as 'morungs.' They always slept in those 'morungs' and not in their own homes with their parents. The girls of the village also had similar dormitories where they lived together. One reason given by the author for the institution of 'morungs' is the fear of incest when grown-up brothers and sisters stay in the same house. This 'morung' is a very old institution going back to thousands of years and only proves that even among early tribes marriage between a brother and sister was never countenanced.

In our Dharmaśāstras sex relations with mother or with sisters by the same mother or by the same father or with the daughter or with the wife of a son, is a heinous sin. [1] The Viṣṇu Smṛti declares that for a person who has committed such a sin there is no other way of expiation than to burn by throwing himself into the fire.[2]

In view of all this it is hard to understand the position of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Or probably this marriage is an allegory proclaiming the eternal union between Yajña and Dakṣiṇā (sacrifice and sacrificial fee). The author of the Bhāgavata believed in allegories as a medium of effective expression. We have already discussed this sympathy for allegories of the author in connection with the Rāsalīlā in the fourth chapter. This marriage is also perhaps an allegory. According to our scriptures there is no sacrifice which is without dakṣiṇā and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa allegorically describes that as the marriage between Yajña and Dakṣiṇā.

That the Bhāgavata Purāṇa meant such marriages to be allegories is also proved by the mention of similar marriages

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1. Manu Smṛ. XI. 59; Yāj. Smṛ. III. 231; Gaut. Ds. XXI. I; Baudh. DS. II. 2. 13; Āpas. DS. 1. 121; Viṣ. Smṛ. XXXVI. 4–7.
2. Viṣ. Smṛ. XXXIV. 1 ff.

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in the eighth adhyāya of the fourth skandha. [1] It is said here that Mṛṣā was married to Adharma and gave birth to Dambha (a son) and Māyā (a daughter). Nirṛti adopted these two as son and daughter-in-law and out of this couple was born Lobha (a son) and Nikṛti (a daughter). Again these two latter married and begot Krodha and Himsā of whom were born Kali and Durukti. Kali begot through Durukti Bhaya (a boy) and Mṛtyu (a girl) and to these two were born Niraya and Yātanā. In this description the meanings of the different names all support the theory of allegory.

Thus Mṛṣā means falsehood and its association with Adharma is but natural. Dambha means dissimulation and Māyā is deceit. These two qualities go together and hence their marriage is mentioned allegorically. Of these two are born Lobha i.e. greed and wickedness which two again give rise to Krodha (anger) and Himsā (violence). That violence is a corollary of anger is well known and that was why Gāndhiji advocated self-control as a preliminary measure for non-violence (ahimsā). Krodha and Himsā lead one to Kali (strife) and Durukti (bad speech). The result of strife and bad language is fear and death, (Bhaya and Mṛtyu) which lead one, according to the Purāṇic mythology, to hell and the tortures of hell (Niraya and Yātana).

Cousin marriage in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

As for cousin marriage the Bhāgavata Purāṇa abounds in them. In the first skandha it is said that Parīkṣit married Irāvatī, the daughter of his maternal uncle. [2] So also Arjuna married Subhadrā who was his cousin as Vasudeva and Kuntī were brother and sister. As pointed out earlier Śrī Kṛṣṇa

1. मृषाधर्मस्य भार्याऽऽसीद्दम्भंमाया च शतुहन् ।
असूत मिथुनं तत्तु निर्ऋतिर्जगुहेऽप्रजः ॥
तयोः समभवल्लोभो निकृतिश्च महामते ।
ताभ्यां क्रोधश्च हिंसा च यद्दुरुक्तिः स्वसा कलिः ॥
दुरुक्तौ कलिराधत्त भयं मृत्युं च सत्तम ।
तयोश्च मिथुनं जज्ञे यातना निरयस्तथा ॥ Bhā. P. IV. 8. 2–4.
2. य उत्तरस्य तनयामुपयेम इरावतीम् ।
जनमेजयादींश्चतुरस्तस्यामुत्पादयत् सुतान् ॥ Ibid. I. 16. 2.

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also married his cousin Mitravindā who was the daughter of his father's sister Rājādhidevī. From this Purāṇa it seems that it was nothing unusual among the princes in those days to marry their cousins, which is usually regarded as incestuous and prohibited by the scriptures.

Cousin marriage in the South

It is interesting to observe that cousin marriages are quite common in South India though not so in the other parts of the country. Probably it was originally a non-Āryan custom which the Āryans adopted later when living with them. In fact among certain non-brāhmanic classes in South India the boy has a right to marry his cousin and it is an unwritten agreement which is seldom violated. Violation of the rights of the young man have been known to lead to quarrels and even regular fights.

The fact that Śrī Kṛṣṇa married his cousin lends support to the theory that he was influenced by non-Āryan culture. The mention of cousin-marriages so often may also confirm the popular theory that the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was a South Indian.

But cousin marriage was slowly becoming unpopular and in the tenth skandha it is said that Rukmi married his granddaughter to the grandson of Rukmiṇī though "he knew such marriage alliances to be sinful." [1]

Svayamvara in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Besides these marriages mentioned above we come across the Svayamvara form in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In this form the bride selected the husband from a number of suitors or she was given to a bridegroom who distinguished himself in a particular tournament. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described as having won the hand of Satya, (Nagnajiti) the daughter of king

1. यद्यप्यनुस्मरन् वैरं रुक्मी कृष्णावमानितः ।
व्यतरद् भागिनेयाय सुतां कुर्वन् स्वसुः प्रियम् ॥
दौहित्र्यानिरुद्धाय पौत्रीं रुक्म्यददाद्धरेः ।
रोचनां बद्धवैरोऽपि स्वसुः प्रियचिकीर्षया ।
जानन्नधर्मं तद् यौनं स्नेहपाशानुबन्धनः ॥ Ibid. X. 71. 23 & 25.

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Nagnajita of Ayodhyā, after slaying seven sharp-horned, fierce bulls, which was a condition for the marriage. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa says, "Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa held those seven bulls easily; and then binding them with ropes he crushed their pride of strength. Thereupon being delighted and stricken with wonder king Nagnajit conferred his own daughter named Nagnajiti upon Kṛṣṇa who accepted the bride with great delight," [1]

Suttee in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

We come across the custom of Suttee in some places of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the first skandha Nārada tells Yudhiṣṭhira that Dhṛtarāṣṭra will die and seeing "the body of her lord consumed along with the hut by the sacrificial fires his virtuous wife will enter the fire in order to follow her husband." [2] In the fifth skandha the death of a learned brahman, who was the father of king Bharata in his second birth, is described. Here it is said that of his two wives the younger one entrusted her children to her co-wife and joined her husband by entering the funeral pyre. [3] The rule followed generally is that if the wife is pregnant or has children to look after she remains alive not because she desires it but because she has to fulfill her duty as a mother. Thus if there is more than one wife, one of them is entrusted with the children while the others follow the husband as in the above instance. Mādrī also burnt herself with Pāṇdu entrusting her

1. किं त्वस्माभिः कृतः पूर्वं समयः सात्वतर्षभ ।
पुंसां वीर्यपरीक्षार्थं कन्यावरपरीप्सया ॥···
एवं समयमाकर्ण्य बद्ध्वा परिकरं प्रभुः ।
आत्मानं सप्तधा कृत्वा न्यगृह्णाल्लीलयैव तान् ॥
बद्ध्वा तान् दामभिः शौरिर्भग्नदर्पान् हतौजसः ।
व्यकर्षल्लीलया बद्धान् बालो दारुमयान् यथा ॥
ततः प्रीतः सुतां राजा ददौ कृष्णाय विस्मितः ।
तां प्रत्यगृह्णाद् भगवान् विधिवत् सदृशीं प्रभुः ॥ Ibid. X. 58. 42, 45–47.

2. दह्यमानेऽग्निभिर्देहे पत्युः पत्नी सहोटजे ।
बहिः स्थिता पतिं साध्वी तमग्निमुवेक्ष्यति ॥ Idid. I. 13. 57.

3. अथ यवीयसी द्विजसती स्वगर्भजातं मिथुनं सपत्न्या उपन्यस्य स्वयमनुसंस्थया पतिलोकमगात् । Ibid. V. 9. 7.

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children to Kuntī. The queen of king Bāhuka decided to follow her husband's funeral pyre. But it is said in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that "the queen was stopped by the sage Aurva who knew her to be enciente." [1] In all other cases the wives burnt themselves with their husband. In the ninth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa king Saudāsa is described as having (through certain circumstances) killed a brahman who was with his wife. The wife of the brahman cursed the king and burnt herself along with her husband. [2] In the eleventh skandha where the destruction of the race of the Yādavas is described it is said that "the women began to embrace their dead husbands and entered into the funeral pyre. The wives of Vasudeva as well as the daughters-in-law of Hari embraced their husbands and at length they all entered the funeral pyres. Rukmiṇī and others whose soul was Kṛṣṇa also entered the burning fire." [3]

But certain sections among the rulers as well as others were not much in favour of this custom is quite evident from certain passages in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the seventh skandha is mentioned the story of a king of Uśīnara named Suyajña. [4] He was killed by his enemies and when his wives and others were mourning his death Yama appeared before them and explained, similar to the teaching of the Gītā, that it is only the body which perishes and not the spirit. By such learned words Yama consoled the relatives of Suyajña and the wives also stopped weeping and did not follow their husband by performing suttee.

Again in the first skandha it is said that Kṛpī, the wife of Droṇa, did not follow her husband when he died "only because of her having given birth to a valiant son." [5] This

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1. वृद्धं तं पञ्चतां प्राप्तं महिष्यनु मरिष्यती ।
   और्वेण जानताऽऽत्मानं प्रजावन्तं निवारिता ॥ Ibid. IX. 8. 3.
2. Ibid. IX. 9. 36.
3. Ibid. XI. 31. 18–20.
4. Ibid. VII. 2. 50–60.
5. स एष भगवान् द्रोणः प्रजारूपेण वर्तते ।
   तस्यात्मनोऽर्धं पत्न्यास्ते नान्वगाद्वीरसूः कृपी ॥ Ibid. I. 7. 45.

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statement is significant. Widows were not treated with equality in the society-nay-even today widows are viewed not very favourably and probably the women who were widowed committed suicide in order to escape the hardships they had to face. But when there was a brave son or sons to look after the mother, as in the case of Kṛpī, the question of suttee did not arise.

The position of Women

From the discussion on 'marriage and suttee' itself an idea of the position of women in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa can be obtained; but that is from a specific point of view. In order to get a complete picture it has to be dealt with separately.

In common with the trend of the whole of Hindu literature the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also does not view "the woman" as an independent personality. She is always under the guardianship of one person or the other; in her childhood it is the father, during her youth it is the husband and after the death of the husband the sons take over. Manu and other Smṛtikāras do not allow the woman any independence even in her own home.[1] Even Vatsyāyana, who is more liberal than Manu, looks upon unrestrained independence for women with disapproval.[2]

Duties of a Woman

The general duties of a woman are to serve her husband and his elders and to act as her husband's companion in the performance of dharma. In the seventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the duties of women are described.[3] It says that women devoted to their husbands should serve him and his relations, and her paramount duty is to keep her husband happy at all times. The husband here is not to be

1. Manu Smṛ. V. 147–8; Yāj. Smṛ. 1. 85–86; Viṣ. Smṛ. XXV. 12–13; Vās. Ds. V. 1–3; Gaut. DS. XVIII. 1; Baudh. DS. II. 3. 44–5.
2. Vātsyāyana Kāmasūtra V. 6. 43 ff.
3. Bhāgavata Purāṇa VII. 11. 25 ff.

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considered as a mere mortal but as an image of Bhagavān Himself. The Bhāgavata says that "a wife who serves her husband regarding him as an image of Śrī Hari, and devoted to him as goddess Lakṣmī is to her consort, rejoices in Vaikuṇṭha like Śrī in the company of her husband....." That the husband is everything to the wife is stressed in not a few places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Thus in the sixth skandha Kaśyapa says that "the husband alone has been declared to be the supreme deity for women. Although Lord Vāsudeva dwelling in the mind of all created beings is the Supreme Deity.....it is He (again) who is worshipped by women as appearing in the form of their husband." [1] Describing Devahūtī, the daughter of Manu and the wife of Kardama the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says "that daughter of Manu, who looked upon her lord as greater than even providence and was fully devoted to him, expected great blessings from him etc." [2]

In the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa the husband is spoken of as the "wife's god." Thus in the Vanaparva Draupadī says that "the husband is wife's god; he is her sole refuge;....." Sītā in the Rāmāyaṇa declares that "the husband is indeed a Deity for the wife." [3] She also says ".....the husband whether wicked or lustful is the highest god to the wife of good morals." [4] The extent to which a wife's devotion to her husband can be practised is amply illustrated by the example of Gāndhārī, the wife of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. This chaste lady kept her eyes blindfold ever since

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1. पतिरेव हि नारीणां दैवतं परमं स्मृतम् ।
मानसः सर्वभूतानां वासुदेवः श्रियः पतिः ॥
स एव देवतालिङ्गैर्नामरूपविकल्पितैः ।
इज्यते भगवान् पुम्भिः स्त्रीभिश्च पतिरूपधृक् ॥ Ibid. VI. 18. 33-4.
2. स वै देवर्षिवर्यस्तां मानवीं समनुव्रताम् ।
दैवाद् गरीयसः पत्युराशासानां महाशिषः ॥
कालेन भूयसा क्षामां कर्शितां व्रतचर्यया etc. Ibid. III. 23. 4-5.
3. अमितस्य हि दातारं भर्तारं का न पूजयेत् ।
साहमेवंगता ज्येष्ठा श्रुतधर्मपरावरा ॥ Rāmā. II. 39. 31.
4. Ibid. II. 117. 23-24.

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her marriage till her death out of sympathy for her blind husband. [1]

Importance of Children

The wife was respected not for herself but because of the children born to her. Religion and superstition so pervaded the life of a Hindu that he believed that he was doomed if no son were born to him. [2] In fact this was the reason primarily for polygamous marriages in ancient India. If the wife fails to provide him with a son she is cast away for all practical purposes. Thus the pitiable position of the wife who has no child is vividly described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.[3] "Fie upon the accursed woman without a child (who is) not esteemed at home by her husband and is insulted like a maid servant by her co-wives blessed with good children..... We wretched women are worse even than a maid servant." Again in the third skandha the Bhāgavata Purāṇa very wisely says that "only those wives are held in great esteem by their husband and enjoy world-wide fame whose husband..... is reproduced through them in the shape of a son." [4]

Unfaithfulness among couples

This partial affection shown to the wife naturally led to unfaithfulness and infidelity between the couples and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across the mention of "unfaithful" or "unchaste" wives very often. In the fourth skandha Veṇa addressing the sages says "who is that Yajñapuruṣa for whom you cherish such devotion as corrupt women, to whom love for their husband is unknown, have for their paramour ?" [5] Again in the fifth skandha Śuka compares the inconstant mind which gives place to anger and lust to a faithless wife who

1. Bhāgavata Purāṇa I. 9. 48.
2. ततः पाहि महाभाग पूर्वैः सह गतं तमः ।
   यथा तरेम दुस्तारं प्रजया तद्विधेहि नः ॥ Ibid. VI. 14. 26.
3. विगप्रजा स्त्रियं पापां पत्युश्चागृहसम्मताम् ।
   सुप्रजाभिः सपत्नीभिर्दासीमिव तिरस्कृताम् ॥ Ibid. VI. 14. 40.
4. Ibid. III. 14. 11.
5. Ibid. IV. 24. 25.

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allows her paramours to enter her husband's house and murder him." [1] In the eleventh skandha Bhagavān tells Uddhava "he who is destined to go through perpetual miseries maintains a cow that does not give birth to young ones, an unchaste wife etc. etc." [2] Yet again in the tenth skandha it is Bhagavān Himself who says that "depending on a particular deity he who worships another does not derive happiness from the latter any more than an unchaste wife who loves a paramour." [3] And in the ninth skandha Bṛhaspati is described as having bad relations with his brother's wife. "Proceeding to copulate with his brother's wife, Mamatā, who was already pregnant, Bṛhaspati forcibly discharged his seed cursing the foetus by which he was stopped." [4] The story goes to say that the seed as soon as it touched the ground became a fully developed male child. The following verse is significant. "Addressing Mamatā who was inclined to abandon the child, (into which the seed was immediately transformed) terribly afraid as she was of being forsaken by her husband (Utathya) etc. etc." This verse makes it clear that a man cannot have any sexual relation with his brother's wife and that Mamatā was afraid that her husband would discover her unchastity. Even if this is a legend intended to account for the son Bharadvāja, the mention of such incidents in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa only proves that unfaithfulness and unchastity did exist in the society of the day. This unchastity was probably encouraged by the saying that a wife is not one's own possession. Sayings like 'A Pledge, a boundary, the property of minors, an open or sealed deposit, women, the property of a king or of a learned priest are not lost by being enjoyed by others[5]

1. Ibid. V. 6. 4.
2. Ibid. XI. 11. 19.
3. आजीव्यैकतरं भावं यस्त्वन्यमुपजीवति।
न तस्माद् विन्दते क्षेमं जारं नार्यसती यथा ॥ Ibid. X. 24. 19.
4. अन्तर्वत्न्यां भ्रातृपत्न्यां मैथुनाय बृहस्पतिः।
प्रवृत्तो वारितो गर्भं शप्त्वा वीर्यमवासृजत् ॥
तं त्यक्तुकामां ममतां भर्तृत्यागविशङ्किताम्।
नामनिर्वचनं तस्य श्लोकमेनं सुरा जगुः ॥ Ibid. IX. 20. 36–37.
5. Vāṣ. DS. XVI. 18.

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are common in the Śāstras. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa in one place says that ".....he should allow those deserving of service the use of even his only wife whom people regard as their sole possession." [1] Though the context here is the attitude that a wise man should adopt regarding even one's dearest possessions like one's wife, such sayings tend to have their infiuence on the common mind with, sometimes, undesirable consequences. The theory of karma for instance is one of those ingenious workings of the Hindu mind. But its bad influence on the mind of a lay man who does not realize its true implications is well known.

Life in general

But these incidents should not be taken as the rule of the day. Such happenings were not common and the ordinary family consisted of a husband and wife with their children. The wife was devoted to her husband and the husband in his turn respected the wife and viewed her as the goddess of the house.

The wives stayed at home mostly and hardly came out. It is said in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that, "when Śrī Kṛṣṇa passed by the main road the women of respectful families of Dvāraka went up to the top of their mansions to enjoy the sight of Him." [2] They hardly came out and were normally busy looking after the homes. But on festivals and other occasions they accompanied their husbands decked in all their finery. Thus in the fourth skandha, describing the Dakṣa sacrifice, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says that "In that sacrifice all the brahman seers as well as celestial sages, manes and gods were adorned with all kinds of jewels; and their wives too were similarly adorned along with their husbands." [3] It further says that "Satī saw charming spouses of demigods with rolling eyes decked in fine costumes and

1. आश्वाघान्तेवसायिभ्यः कामान् संविभजेद् यथा।
अप्येकामात्मनो दारां नृणां स्वत्वग्रहो यतः॥ Bhā. P. VII. 14. 11.
2. Ibid. I. 11. 24.
3. तस्मिन् ब्रह्मर्षयः सर्वे देवर्षिपितृदेवताः।
आसन् कृतस्वस्त्ययनास्तत्पत्न्यश्च समृत्विजः॥ Ibid. IV. 3. 4.

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adorned with polished ear-rings and wearing gold ornaments round their necks, flying in their aerial cars with their husbands from all directions etc." [1] When the husband is not at home the wife is sad and uninterested in the happenings around her. She is called a Virahā and till her husband comes back to her she gives up all amusement, decoration of the body, going to fuuctions and visiting other people's houses. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes the wives of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as overjoyed at the return of their Lord and says that "they quickly abandoned their seats and also the vows of austerity." [2] Though the Smṛtis do mention how a wife whose husband is absent from home should behave, [3] the wife does not consider it as imposed upon her for it is natural for a lady who loves her husband truly to behave thus.

Education and culture of women

Hārita informs us that there were two kinds of women, the Brahmavādinis and the Sadyovadhvaḥ. [4] Though he does not specifically mention marriage for the Brahmavādinīs there is no rule dividing the two. A married housewife can also be a Brahmavādinī and that is what we find in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Women like Satī and Kuntī inspire awe in the minds of anyone who goes through their learned expositions. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa [5] Kuntī expounds the philosophical truth that all is One and there is unity in this apparent diversity. She says addressing Kṛṣṇa "O Lord, You are the soul of the universe, nay, the universe itself. You are as a matter of fact devoid of birth and actions. Your birth and actions in the subhuman species as well as among men, ṛṣis and aquatic creatures are mere sport etc. etc."

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1. Ibid. IV. 3. 6-7.
2. ...उत्तस्थुरारात्सहसाऽऽसनाशयत् साकं व्रतैर्व्रीडितलोचनाननाः ॥
   Ibid. I. 11. 31.
3. क्रीडां शरीरसंस्कारं समाजोत्सवदर्शनम् ।
   हास्यं परगृहे यानं त्यजेत् प्रोषितभर्तृका ॥ Yāj. Smṛ.
4. Hārita DS. XXI. 23.
5. Bhā. P. I. 8. 18-43.

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Further she says that "some people aver that though unborn you have appeared in the race of your beloved Yadu of sacred renown just in order to enhance his glory; others declare that though birthless you were born of Devakī for the protection of this world and the extermination of the enemies of the gods; still others assert that in response to the prayer of Brahmā you have appeared to relieve the burden of the earth etc."

Now all this definitely points to the fact that Kuntī was well read and her courage to speak in an open audience in such a way also proves the same thing.

That the general education and culture among women was high is proved by passages like Bhāgavata Purāṇa I. 10. 21–30.[1] Where talking among themselves about Vāsudeva the women of Hastināpura say "Verily He is the same eternal person who abides in His singular undifferentiated self even during the night of universal dissolution prior to the manifestation of the three guṇas when the individual souls retire into god, the universal spirit, and when all the forces of creation too lie dormant. It was He who with the intention of endowing with a form and name the spirit who is neither, then inspired His Prakṛti—which deludes the Jīvas, who are identical in essence with Him and which impelled by His own energy is disposed to create—and revealed the Vedas and other scriptures.....etc." This conversation speaks for itself and indicates the level of general education among the women of the time. Education need not only mean book learning. Any instruction which strengthens the body and mind is education. The elders in the house can instruct their children orally and this oral instruction is nothing new in India. Vast treasures of learning have been handed down orally and in such a country it is not rare to find that women were also as learned as men in the different fields of study.

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1. स वै किलायं पुरुषः पुरातनो य एक आसीदविशेष आत्मनि ।
अग्रे गुणेभ्यो जगदात्मनीश्वरे निमीलितात्मन्निशि सुप्तशक्तिषु ॥
स एव भूयो निजवीर्यचोदितां स्वजीवमायां प्रकृतिं सिसृक्षतीम् ।
अनामरूपात्मनि रूपनामनी विधित्समानोऽनुससार शास्त्रकृत् ॥
Bhā. P. I. 10. 21 ff.

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Satī is a great example belonging to this class of learned women. Besides general education she proved that she knew the science of yoga thoroughly and gave up her life like a true yogī when insulted by her father. Her speech in the sacrificial hall is unique combining philosophical content with worldly wisdom. When she says that 'a man should shut his ears and leave the place where his master (a defender of righteousness) is being vituperated by unbridled men in case he is powerless; or if he has the power he should forcibly cut off the vile tongue that indulges in such blasphemy and then give up one's life as well' [1] one is reminded of the Manu Smṛti where similar sentiments are expressed when one's master is spoken ill of. [2] Satī preaches religious toleration when she says that "the mind of a great sage revelling in his own self does not (invariably) follow the utterances of the Vedas. Just as the movements of an immortal and a human being vary, even so the ways of the enlightened and the ignorant are not alike. Therefore while holding fast exclusively to one's own duty one should never cast aspersions against another. Activity in the shape of performing one's religious duties (pouring oblations into the sacred fire and so on) and that consisting of pursuits carried on in retirement (such as control of one's mind and senses etc.) are equally right both being prescribed in the Vedas severally for the two types of men, the one characterized by worldly attachment and the other by its absence, as will appear from the fact that the two are found imcompatible in an agent practising both at a time." [3] We now see Satī as the great Yogī who sits down on the floor facing north—She sipped some water, wrapped herself with an yellow piece of linen, closed her

1. Ibid. IV. 4. 17.
2. गुरोर्यत्र परीवादो निन्दा वापि प्रवर्तते ।
कर्णौ तत्र पिधातव्यौ गन्तव्यं वा ततोऽन्यतः ॥
3. न वेदवादाननुवर्तते मतिः स्व एव लोके रमतो महामुनेः ।
यथा गतिर्देवमनुष्ययोः पृथक् स्व एव धर्मे न परं क्षिपेत्स्थतः ॥
कर्म प्रवृत्तं च निवृत्तमप्यृतं वेदे विविच्योभयलिङ्गमाश्रितम् ।
विरोधि तद्यौगपदैककर्तरि द्वयं तथा ब्रह्मणि कर्म नच्छति ॥

Bhā. P. IV. 4. 19-20.

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eyes and resorted to the device of shedding the body after the manner of the yogīs. She gave up her body unable to bear the slight shown to her husband Śiva. [1] This also shows to what extent a wife can be devoted to her husband. Satī is only one of the many Hindu wives whose unflinching devotion to their husbands is beyond all imagination.

Two types of women

Thus the society described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa had its family women who were content to look after their homes administering to the comforts of their husbands and children. They knew their duties as a housewife well and brought happiness and contentment to their family. But there were other women who combined great wisdom and learning with their duties and to this category belonged women like Kuntī, Satī, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Rukmiṇī was a princess of great conviction of purpose. Knowing that her heart inclined towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa she decided to marry only him or put an end to herself. At a time when forwardness in women was not viewed favourably she took the initiative to send a love message to Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa says 'Rukmiṇī, after great deliberation in her mind, sent speedily a trustworthy brāhmaṇa to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with her submission to him, in confidence." [2] Rukmiṇī while debating with herself as to whether Kṛṣṇa will come or not says "although about to come that beautiful-featured Kṛṣṇa will not come to marry me thinking of my blamable forwardness." [3] She knew that she will be censured by the whole world if things went amiss. But that did not deter her from following the inclination of her mind. Satyabhāmā was a lady possessing tremendous courage and will power. It is mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that when her father Satrajit was murdered by Śatadhānu (while Kṛṣṇa was away) she did not wait for

1. Bhā. P., IV. 4. 24–27.
2. तदवेत्यासितापाङ्गी वैदर्भी दुर्मना भृशम् ।
विचिन्त्याप्तं द्विजं कंचित कृष्णाय प्राहिणोद्द्रुतम् ॥ Ibid. X. 52. 26.
3. अपि मय्यनवद्यात्मा दृष्ट्वा किञ्चिज्जुगुप्सितम् ।
मत्पाणिग्रहणे नूनं नायाति हि कृतोद्यमः ॥ Ibid. X. 53. 24.

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her husband to come back nor did she send a message through someone. She herself proceeded to Hastināpura and communicated the news to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [1]

Low women

But side by side with such ladies the society did have women whose morality was not of a high order and who indulged in drinking and other vices. It is of such women that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa speaks when it says that "a wise man should never put faith in a wanton woman." It further says that "the wise are of the opinion that the ties of friendship of wolves and wanton women who are looking out for newer and newer delights is inconstant." [2] Again in the third skandha the Bhāgavata advises one to shun not only the company of women but even the company of those attached to women. [3]

There were prostitutes in the society such as Piṅgalā who is mentioned in the eleventh skandha and sometimes they were the cause of ruin of many families. In the sixth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is narrated the story of a brāhmaṇa named Ajāmila who abandoned his lawful wedded wife and spent his fortune on a Śūdra woman (harlot). The Bhāgavata further says that after having spent all his money on her "this stupid fellow brought money from here and there by fair and foul means and maintained the family of this woman who was soon the mother of many children." [4] Such women indulged in drinking and talking about this same woman when the brāhmaṇa Ajāmila saw her for the first time the Bhāgavata says "he saw a certain profligate Śūdra (man)

1. तैलद्रोण्यां मृतं प्रास्य जगाम गजसाह्वयम् ।
कृष्णाय विदितार्थाय तप्ताऽऽचख्यौ पितुर्वधम् ॥ Bhā. P. X. 57. 8.
2. कथं कश्यपदायादाः पुंश्चल्यां मयि सङ्गताः ।
विश्वासं पण्डितो जातु कामिनीषु न याति हि ॥
सालावृकाणां स्त्रीणां च स्वैरिणीनां सुरद्विषः ।
सख्यान्याहुरनित्यानि नूनं नूनं विचिन्वताम् ॥ Ibid. VIII. 9. 9-10.
3. Ibid. III. 31. 33-35; 39.
4. Ibid. VI. 1. 63-66.

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who was a libidinous and shameless fellow drunk with spirituous liquor distilled from meal, sporting with a harlot of the same class who was not only similarly drunk with her eyes swimming through intoxication, but stood by his side in a half-naked condition singing and joking with him." [1]

Apart from such low women the royal women of the king's harem also probably indulged in drink. Thus in the fourth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is said that king Purañjana was so enslaved by his queen that "on her drinking wine he too drank wine and was overcome with intoxication....." [2]

Some statements in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa examined

In spite of all that has been said we cannot deny that here and there in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across a rather peculiar opinion about the nature of women in general. She is very often decried as a seducer of men and men are advised to be alert in the company of women. It even goes to the extent of saying that "one should avoid (the presence of) even one's daughter when (she is) all by herself; at other times one should remain with her (only) so long as it is absolutely necessary." [3] This is in keeping with Manu's statement that one should not sit in a lonely place with even one's own mother, sister or daughter. [4] Bhīṣma in the Mahābhārata says that, in a sense, the female is naturally a temptress and a lurer. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa expresses similar sentiments when it says that Viṣṇu assumed the form of Mohinī in the tussle for nectar between the daityas and devas because "woman is the most effective and appropriate means of infatuating and beguiling the treacherous and greedy daityas, etc." [5] The 'woman' has all along been used

1. Bhā. P., VI. 1. 59–60.
2. Ibid. IV. 25. 57.
3. नन्वग्निः प्रमदा नाम घृतकुम्भसमः पुमान् ।
   सुतामपि रहो जह्यादन्यदा यावदर्थकृत् ॥ Ibid., VII. 12. 9.
4. मात्रा स्वस्रा दुहित्रा वा न विविक्तासनो भवेत् ।
   बलवानिन्द्रियग्रामो विद्वांसमपि कर्षति ॥ Manu Smr. II. 215.
5. कौतूहलाय दैत्यानां योषिद्वेषो मया कृतः ।
   पश्यता सुरकार्याणि गते पीयूषभोजने ॥ Bhā. P. VIII. 12. 15.

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as a temptress in Hindu mythology. The stories of the various ṛṣis like Viśvāmitra who were tempted away from their tapas by women are all well-known. It is also one of the ways of telling the people that one should guard oneself against unnatural temptations. The statements in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa should also be viewed in this light and none other.

Popular religious beliefs

Bhakti and the worship of Viṣṇu is the religion of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and it has been discussed in the previous chapters. But side by side with bhakti the society did indulge in other religious practices and also held certain beliefs. Here we find belief in the Varṇāśramadharma, exaltation of Ahiṁsā, references to animal and human sacrifice, Śiva and Śakti worship, performance of saṁskāras, belief in the theory of karman, in the will of god or destiny, belief in good and bad omens and many more such things.

Varṇāśramadharma

Belief in the varṇāśramadharma was prevalent and sayings like ".....is adored by men belonging to all the four stages of life" [1] and ".....the consummation of duties efficiently performed by men according to their respective varṇa and āśrama lies in securing the pleasure of Śrī Hari" [2] are found throughout the text. Five whole chapters of the seventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa describe the varṇāśramadharma in a detailed way and the account follows more or less the Manu Smṛti, the Mahābhārata and other scriptures. The general rules to be observed by all castes are first given ethical, spiritual and devotional. The specific duties of the different castes then follows. [3]

Castelessness in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

Here we come across a śloka which says that "if the indications of one caste are found in a man belonging to another

1. Bhā. P., I. 3. 13.
2. Ibid. I. 2. 13.
3. Ibid. VII. 11. 21–24.

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caste he is to be specified by the caste of his indications and not by the caste of his birth." [1] References of this kind are found throughout the text. Thus in the first skandha Parīkṣit addressing Kali says "who are you that are powerful enough to strike the weak so violently in this land protected by me ? Like an actor on the stage you have put on the garb of a king, but by your actions you are a śūdra." [2] These passages clearly indicate the absence of rigidity in the caste system. As far as the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is concerned the keynote is that a man's action and not his birth determines his caste. The story of Rantideva also proves the same thing. It is said that Rantideva after starving for fortyeight days got some food and when about to eat it was approached by a brahmin, a śūdra, a man with dogs and a caṇḍāla. He gave away his food to these—showing that he viewed everyone of them equally. The brahmin, the śūdra and the caṇḍāla made no difference to him and all were just human beings.

Though passages extolling the brāhmaṇas are found still there are other verses like "A friend and well-wisher of the brāhmaṇas as you are it is but natural for you to believe that the brahman is your supreme deity. The fact, however, is that the Lord is the Self and Deity of not only the brāhmaṇas, etc." which try to tell the Bhāgavata idea that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. The vocation of priesthood also comes in for reproach in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Viśvarūpa on one occasion says ".....acts appropriate to noble souls being accomplished in this household-life by me with the aforesaid means, how shall I take, Oh suzerain lords, to the reproachable vocation of a priest with which a fool alone remains pleased." [3]

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1. यस्य यल्लक्षणं प्रोक्तं पुंसो वर्णाभिव्यञ्जकम् ।
   यदन्यत्रापि दृश्येत तत् तेनैव विनिर्दिशेत् ।। Bhā. P., VII. 11. 35.
2. कस्त्वं मच्छरणे लोके बलाद्धंस्यबलान् बली ।
   नरदेवोऽसि वेषेण नटवत्कर्मणा द्विजः ॥ Ibid. I. 17. 5.
3. ..... कथं विगर्ह्यं नु करोम्यधीश्वराः पौरोधसं हृष्यति येन दुर्मतिः ॥
   Ibid. VI. 7. 36.

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Violators of the Varṇās'ramadharma

Passages like Bhāgavata Purāṇa VII. 15. 38–9 [1] prove that there were men who did not conform to the caste or āśrama rules. It says that "neglect of religious duties on the part of a householder, violation of the vow of chastity, etc. on the part of a brahmacārī, reversion to village life on the part of an anchorite and lack of self-restraint on the part of a recluse—men guilty of these (abberrations) are indeed the vilest among those embracing the āśramas. They actually bring the āśrama to ridicule, etc."

Impostors in society

There were others who used the religious garb as a means of livelihood. In the eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we find a sannyāsin being abused by people in the following manner. "They tried to make him speak, while he observed the vow of silence and if he did not speak they used to strike him. Some calling him a thief would bind him with a rope exclaiming 'kill him, kill him.' Some people saying this wicked man has assumed the marks of a religious man; being deprived of his wealth and kinsmen he has taken to this mode of life "used to villify him." [2] Though in this case the sannyāsin was a genuine one such utterances only prove that the society had its share of impostors as well.

Thus the society described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa did have the varṇāśrama dharma but the rigidity of caste was certainly absent. The path of bhakti was also responsible for this attitude as the Pāñcarātra doctrine does not give any scope for caste distinctions.

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1. गृहस्थस्य क्रियात्यागो व्रतत्यागो वटोरपि ।
तपस्विनो ग्रामसेवा भिक्षोरिन्द्रियलोलता ॥
आश्रमापसदा ह्येते खल्वाश्रमविडम्बकाः ।
देवमायाविमूढांस्तानुपेक्षेतानुकम्पया ॥ Ibid. VII. 15. 38–39.

2. ..... यतवाचं वाचयन्ति ताडयन्ति न वक्ति चेत् ।
तर्जयन्त्यपरे वाग्भिः स्तेनोऽयमिति वादिनः ।
बध्नन्ति रज्ज्वा तं केचिद् बध्यतां बध्यतामिति ॥
क्षिपन्त्येकेऽवजानन्त एष धर्मध्वजः शठः ।
क्षीणवित्त इमां वृत्तिमग्रहीत स्वजनोज्झितः ॥ Ibid. XI. 23. 36–38.

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Ahiṁsā

At many places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across the mention of ahiṁsā. Preaching ahiṁsā the text says "one cannot atone for the destruction of a single life by any number of sacrifices any more than one can purify muddy water by dissolving more mud into it or counteract the pollution of spirituous liquor by adding more to it." [1] In VII. 15. 8 ahiṁsā is extolled thus—"For men seeking true piety there is no other such virtue as abstinence from violence to living beings perpetrated through mind, speech and body." And explaining why ahiṁsā should be practised the Bhāgavata says "He who has his foot pricked with a thorn would never have a fellow being suffer such agony having realized the similarity of (all) living beings (so far as the experience of pleasure and pain is concerned) by means of external signs (such as facial expression, etc.)." [2] In XI. 5. 14–15 the Bhāgavata again says that "The animals which an ignorant, haughty, proud and impious man slays for his object, devour him in the next world. Whoever by his wrong conduct disregards the Lord Hari existing as souls in other bodies, having their affection fixed in this body with their children and others, fall into hell."

Sacrifices

Though the Bhāgavata Purāṇa advocates ahiṁsā we find mention of Vedic sacrifices as well here. In the first skandha itself the Bhāgavata approves of sacrifices when it says that "Arjuna quickly seized the hard-hearted son of Kṛpī, his eyes burning with rage, and bound him with a rope as one would bind a sacrificial animal." Vedic sacrifices like the aśvamedha sacrifice, the vājapeya sacrifice and the Bṛhaspatisava are all mentioned in the text. In the fourth skandha the royal sage Aṅga is described as having performed the horse-sacrifice. [3] King Yudhiṣṭhira, king Pṛthu, king Bali

1. यथा पङ्केन पङ्काम्भः सुरया वा सुराकृतम् ।
भूतहत्यां तथैवैकां न यज्ञैर्मार्ष्टुमर्हति ॥ Bhā. P., I. 8. 52.
2. यथा कण्टकविद्धाङ्गो जन्तोर्नेच्छति तां व्यथाम् ।
जीवसाम्यं गतो लिङ्गैर्न तथाविद्धकण्टकः ॥ Ibid. X. 10. 14.
3. अङ्गोऽध्वमेधं राजर्षिराजहार महाक्रतुम् etc. Ibid. IV. 13. 25.

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and many other royal sages are declared to have performed the aśvamedha sacrifice Pṛthu performed the sacrifice as many as ninetynine times, the hundredth having been interrupted by Indra. Performance of a hundred aśvamedha sacrifices was supposed to convey the position of Indra on the performer and hence Indra never let anyone complete it. Talking of Dakṣa in the fourth skandha the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says "having performed the vājapeya sacrifice he commenced the greatest of all sacrifices known by the name of Bṛhaspatisava.[1] The contradiction between preaching ahiṁsā and practising hiṁsā in sacrifices simultaneously is got out of by distinctly stating that slaughter in Vedic sacrifices is not slaughter.[2] But we can definitely say that the society at that time was veering towards ahiṁsā. Vaidika sacrifices were accepted but hiṁsā was avoided as far as possible. Thus the offering of meat in śrāddha is condemned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa many times.[3]

Human sacrifice

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we find mention of human sacrifice as well. The legend of Śunaḥśepa has been dealt with in the third chapter. There we come across a clear reference to human sacrifice. There are references to human sacrifice in other places in the book and it is interesting to note that such sacrifices occur very often in connection with Śakti pūjā.

Śakti worship

Though the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is a gospel of the Vaiṣṇavas it contains plenty of evidence concerning the worship of Śakti. The Tantras, the sacred books of the Śāktas, are mentioned in a number of places in the Purāṇa.[4] Describing the worship of Śakti in the fifth skandha it is said that "a chieftain of the Śūdras, desirous of an issue, proceeded to

1. इष्ट्वा स वाजपेयेन ब्रह्मिष्ठानभिभूय च।
बृहस्पतिसवं नाम समारेभे क्रतूत्तमम् ॥ Bhā. P., IV. 3. 3.
2. Ibid. XI. 5. 13.
3. न दद्यादामिषं श्राद्धे न चाद्याद् धर्मतत्त्ववित।
मुन्यन्नैः स्यात परा प्रीतिर्यथा न पशुहिंसया ॥ Ibid. VII. 15. 7.
4. Ibid. IV. 24. 62; XI. 3. 47; VIII. 6. 9; XI. 27. 49.

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behead a human victim to goddess Bhadrakālī, etc." [1] The process by which the human victim was sacrificed is described thus—"Then the burglars washed him according to their own traditional usage, provided him with a new piece of cloth and graced him with jewels, sandal-paste, a wreath of flowers, a sacred mark on the forehead and so on, and when he had had his meal they seated the human victim in front of goddess Bhadrakālī according to the standard rules of animal sacrifice offering incense, light, a wreath of flowers, parched grains of paddy, young leaves, sprouts, fruits and sweets, etc. and loudly singing songs and hymns and sounding clay and wooden tomtoms. Then the chief, officiating as a priest to the chieftain, took up a most fearful and sharp-edged sword that had been consecrated by pronouncing on it a mantra sacred to goddess Bhadrakālī, with a view to sating her with the inebriating blood of a human victim." [2] Again Bhāgavata Purāṇa V. 26. 31 runs as follows : "As regards men who propitiate goddess Bhadrakālī, the god Bhairava and other deities here by actually sacrificing human beings to them etc." It is significant that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not mention the actual slaying of the human victim. In the Jaḍabharata legend described in the Purāṇa all preparations are made for the sacrifice but the deity concerned intervenes and stops the slaughter from actually taking place. For a book which preaches ahiṁsā it was too much to countenance actual killing of a human being and though there could have been stray incidents of such kind in the society, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa does not mention them.

But Śakti worship also was not always accompanied by sacrifices. As if predicting the worship of Śakti in her various forms, Bhagavān addresses Yogamāyā as follows—"People will worship you by means of incense, offerings of food and other presents, recognising you as the supreme controller of men seeking various boons and as the bestower of desired blessings. Men will erect temples on earth and

1. अथ कदाचित्कश्चिद् वृषलपतिर्भद्रकाल्यै पुरुषपशुमालभतापत्यकामः ॥
Bhā. P., V. 9. 12.

2. Ibid, V. 9. 15–16.

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give (diverse) appellations (to you) such as Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī and Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānī, Śāradā and Ambikā." [1] In X. 4. 9–12 the form of Śakti is described as "Śakti was seen in the form of a goddess with eight mighty arms equipped with weapons. Adorned with ethereal wreaths, raiment, sandal-paste and bejewelled ornaments, she wielded a bow, a pike, an arrow, a shield, a sword, a conch and a mace." This agrees with the images of Śakti ordinarily in vogue. Again in the tenth skandha the maids of Vraja are depicted as worshipping goddess Kātyāyanī by offering sandal paste, fragrant flowers, propitiatory oblations (like cocoanut) incense and lights, etc. [2] Rukmiṇī in sending her love message to Kṛṣṇa tells him that "On the day before marriage a great procession of the tutelary deity (Ambikā) is started in which the bride goes to the temple of the goddess Ambikā, etc." [3] When Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not come back immediately after killing Jāmbavān it is said that Devakī, Rukmiṇī, Vasudeva and others started worshipping Durgā called Candrabhāgā at Dvārakā (with a view to propitiating the goddess for the safe return of Śrī Kṛṣṇa)." [4]

The combined worship of Śiva and Śakti also finds mention in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the tenth skandha it is said that the citizens of Vraja worshipped the Almighty Lord Śiva as well as goddess Ambikā with devotion, through various articles of worship. [5]

Śiva worship

Viṣṇu and Śiva are the two great gods of the Purāṇic age and even a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa, which reflects the life of the people it portrays, cannot ignore the Śaiva element in it. Thus there are a number of reference to Śiva worship in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

1. Bhā. P., X. 2. 11–12.
2. Ibid. X. 22. 1–3.
3. पूर्वेद्युरस्ति महती कुलदेवियात्रा यस्यां वहिर्नववधूर्गिरिजामुपेयात् ॥ etc. Ibid. X. 52. 42.
4. Ibid. X. 56. 35.
5. Ibid. X. 34. 1–2.

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In the tenth skandha Kaṁsa orders his men to make preparations for a bow-sacrifice in which Śiva is worshipped in the form of a bow and is conducive to victory over one's enemies. He says "Let a bow sacrifice be commenced with due ceremony on the (coming) fourteenth lunar day. Let the priests kill animals fit to be sacrificed to Lord Śiva, the bestower of all boons." [1] In the Dakṣa sacrifice the neglect shown to Śiva resulted in the destruction of the sacrifice itself. In the churning of the ocean of milk for nectar, described in the eighth skandha, a deadly poison named Halāhala issued out first. To protect them from this unbearable poison all beings, mortal and immortal, worshipped Śiva, who drank the poison and saved them from imminent death.

Saṁskāras

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across the mention of Saṁskāras or purificatory rites. According to the Hindu Dharmaśāstra, the individual has to pass through many saṁskāras, for these are intended to purify the body, beginning from the time that the foetus is laid to the death of a person. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa speaks of such people who perform these religious rites in not a very favourable light. Thus "performing religious rites (from the ceremony connected with impregnation) down to the obsequies (antyeṣṭi) they ascend to the abode of the manes presided over by Aryaman, by the southern path (dark path) and are (eventually) born in the line of their own progeny. Thereafter when their merit is exhausted they are forthwith robbed of their glorious state by the gods and helplessly descend once more to this world." [2] Incidentally that the belief in transmigration of souls was prevalent is also proved by the above verse.

In another context it is said that Jaḍabharata's father performed all the saṁskāras upto the ceremony of samāvartana

1. आरभ्यतां धनुर्यागश्चतुर्दश्यां यथाविधि ।
विशसन्तु पशून् मेध्यान् भूतराजाय मीढुषे ॥ Bhā. P., X. 36. 26.
2. Ibid. III. 32. 19–20.

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for his son. [1] The samāvartana was performed at the close of the brahmacarya period and it marked the termination of the student life.

The Jātakarma is mentioned in the sixth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa performed by Citraketu when his son was born. [2] Again in the ninth skandha Kaṇva is described as performing the saṁskāras beginning with Jātakarma for Śakuntalā's son. [3] Śrī Kṛṣṇa was also not exempt from the general custom in the society. As soon as Nanda discovered that Yaśodā had given birth to a son he called the brahmins and had the Jātakarma ceremony performed for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[4]

The Jātakarma ceremony was performed as soon as the child was born and briefly it consists in touching the tongue of a new-born male child thrice with ghee after appropriate prayers. Prayers are also recited for the long-life of the child and also for the strength of the child.

In the tenth skandha there is mentioned a saṁskāra which is rather peculiar. [5] It says that "once on the occasion of the ceremonial ablution (of the infant Kṛṣṇa) to commemorate His turning in the bed (which generally takes place at the end of three months) when the constellation under which He was born was ascendant Yaśodā performed, in the midst of the ladies assembled, the rite of sprinkling her son with water accompanied by the playing of musical instruments, songs and the chanting of sacred texts done by the brāhmaṇas." After this Kṛṣṇa is described as sleeping in a cot underneath "the cart He overturned." This saṁskāra is probably another version of the niṣkramaṇa ceremony mentioned in the Gṛhya-sūtras. The niṣkramaṇa saṁskāra took place either in the

1. Bhā. P., V. 9. 4.
2. Ibid. VI. 14. 33-4.
3. Ibid. IX. 20. 18.
4. .....वाचयित्वा स्वस्त्ययनं जातकर्मात्मजस्य वै ।
कारयामास विधिवत् पितृदेवार्चनं तथा ॥ Ibid. X. 5. 1-2.
5. कदाचिदौत्थानिककौतुकाप्लवे जन्मर्क्षयोगे समवेतयोषिताम् ।
वादित्रगीतद्विजमन्त्रवाचकैश्चकार सूनोरभिषेचनं सती ॥
नन्दस्य पत्नी कृतमज्जनादिकं विप्रैः कृतस्वस्त्ययनं सुपूजितैः ।
अन्नाद्यवासः स्रगभीष्टधेनुभिः संजातनिद्राक्षमशीशयच्छनैः ॥ Ibid. X. 7.-45.

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third or fourth month after the birth of the child. The main ceremony here is that the father brought the child out and made it look at the sun. Though nothing of this kind is mentioned in the saṁskāra described above, the fact that Kṛṣṇa was placed under a cart is significant. A cart does not stand inside the house but outside. Hence to place Kṛṣṇa under the cart there is the necessity of bringing him out of the house. Probably this was a local variation of the niṣkramaṇa saṁskāra.

The Nāmakaraṇa saṁskāra is mentioned in the tenth skandha in connection with naming Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.[1] And the Upanayana saṁskāra, wherein the person concerned is invested with the sacred thread, (or initiated into studies) is described as being performed to both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the 45th chapter of the tenth skandha.[2]

The antyeṣṭi saṁskāras are the ceremonies performed at the death of the person and we come across reference to obsequies in many places in the Purāṇa. Talking of Prahlāda in the seventh skandha the text says that "Prahlāda too did what was due to his (deceased) father by way of funeral rites, etc."[3]

A description of the saṁskāras performed by the people show that the society at the time of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa followed the different domestic rituals and the doctrine of bhakti was added on to the already many-sided Hinduism. The genius of Hinduism is in absorbing any new doctrine or philosophy. At the time of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the doctrine of bhakti was just gaining ground and was not firmly established. The time of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Caitanya, and other protagonists of the Bhakti school was yet to come and change the outlook of the people.

Karma and fate

Belief in the theory of karma and fate was quite common. Sayings like ".....whatever he reaps in the world follows

1. Bhā. P., X. 8. 11.
2. Ibid. X. 45. 26.
3. Ibid. VII. 10. 24.

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from his own (past) actions." [1] "Therefore knowing it for certain that all these events depend upon the Will of Providence, follow His Will, etc." [2] and "A thing protected by destiny remains intact even though dropped on the road while that which is consigned to destruction by fate perishes even though staying at home, etc." [3] are common in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. The influence of one's own actions in determining one's future life is amply illustrated by many legends. Thus the undue love and affection which Bharata bestowed on a deer during his former birth resulted in his being born as a deer in the next birth.

Image worship was very popular as has been discussed in the previous chapter. Going to sacred places on pilgrimage was another aspect of the popular religion. Vidura and Balarāma are described as having visited the various holy places. [4]

Some popular beliefs

The sanctity of the Tulasī plant was firmly established by now and superstitious beliefs in good and bad omens were quite common. The throbbing of the left eye, left arm and left thigh make Yudhiṣṭhira sad as he says "these will surely bring some unhappy news." [5] The throbbing of the same limbs in the case of a lady brings good news. Thus in the tenth skandha Rukmiṇī's left thigh, left arm and left eye trembled "which bespoke her well-being." [6]

The same superstition prevailed as to the question of the time that death should come. Death at a particular season and time was supposed to be beneficial while at other times it led to bad results. Thus Bhīṣma, though mortally wounded when it was Dakṣiṇāyana, is reported to have held on till

1. विकल्पे विद्यमानेऽपि न ह्यसन्तोषहेतवः ।
   पुंसो मोहमृते भिन्ना यल्लोके निजकर्मभिः ॥ Bhā. P., IV. 8. 28.
2. तस्मादिदं दैवतन्त्रं व्यवस्य भरतर्षभ etc. Ibid. I. 9. 17.
3. Ibid. VII. 2. 40; VII. 10. 64–5; X. 24. 13.
4. Ibid. I. 13. 1–2; X. 79.
5. Ibid. I. 14. 11.
6. Ibid. X. 53. 27.

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Uttarāyaṇa set in and then gave up his life, for Uttarāyaṇa "is a time which is coveted by yogīs....." [1]

Spells, incantations and magic

Religion had its dark side also. Right from Vedic times it is known that spells and incantations were used not only for beneficial purposes but also for injuring others. The Atharvaveda contains a number of such mantras. The society described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa had its own share of black magic. In the third skandha when Hiraṇyākṣa takes his trident to hurl it at Yajña he is compared to "one who uses spells for a malevolent purpose against a holy Brāhmaṇa."[2] When Bali used spells and incantations to win the fight with Indra he is abused by Indra in the following words : ".....though no better than a conjurer, O fool, you seek to overpower us by means of incantations. Those foolish robbers who seek to ascend to heaven by means of spells I cast still lower down etc. I shall lop off your head even though you are an adept in the use of malevolent spells." [3]

Magic and hypnotism played a great part in the wars described in the Purāṇa, which shows that the society was not a stranger to the "science of hypnosis" and that it had developed considerably in those days itself. The fight between Kṛṣṇa and Śālva shows to what extent magic and hypnotism had developed. Śālva came in a chariot which was unapproachable, was invisible and moved through the air. This was probably an air-borne vehicle going at such tremendous speed that it could not be approached and also could not be seen properly because of its great speed. Śālva uses hypnotism when he makes Kṛṣṇa see his own father Vasudeva having his head cut off by Śālva. This was used as a means to unnerve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the battle. [4] Hypnotising the opponents

1. Bhā. P., I. 9. 29.
2. जग्राह त्रिशिखं शूलं ज्वलज्ज्वलनलोलुपम् ।
यज्ञाय धृतरूपाय विप्रायाभिचरन् यथा ॥ Ibid. III. 19. 13.
3. Ibid. VIII. 11. 4–6.
4. इति ब्रुवाणे गोविन्दे सौभराट् प्रत्युपस्थितः ।
वसुदेवमिवानीय कृष्णं चेदमुवाच सः ॥

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in war and making them see the raining of maces, iron clubs and showers of stones, serpents etc. was practised freely. The Yakṣas and Rākṣasas were supposed to be adepts in such tricks as the Bhāgavata Purāṇa IV. 10. 28 says. Describing the war between the Yakṣas and Dhruva it is said that by the tricks of the demons "the sky was overcast with a canopy of clouds..... They rained torrents of blood as well as phelgm, etc; pus, ordure, wine and fat and before him fell headless trunks from the sky. Then appeared a mountain in the air and there rained on all sides maces, iron clubs, swords and musalas as well as showers accompanied by volleys of stones. Serpents ran up to him hissing with a thunder-like roar and discharging fire from their eyes in rage, and there came rushing in herds of mad elephants, lions and tigers." [1] A similar account is given in the fight between Bali and Indra described in the eighth skandha. [2]

Change of sex

In the ninth skandha we have the interesting incident of Manu's daughter changing sex with the help of Vasiṣṭha's mantras.[3] The change in sex from a female to a male is believed to have been due to the efficacy of Vasiṣṭha's prayers. Probably due to the will power of Vasiṣṭha the change was effected. We come across such sex changes in other books as well. The story of Śikhaṇḍin in the Mahābhārata, [4] that of Nārada becoming Nāradī in the Nārada Purāṇa are all instances of this kind. In Buddhist literature also we find references to change in sex. In Vinaya piṭaka [5] "there is mention of a

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एष ते जनिता तातो यदर्थमिह जीवसि ।
वधिष्ये वीक्षितस्तेऽमुमीशश्चेत् पाहि बालिश ॥
एवं निर्भर्त्स्य मायावी खड्गेनानकदुन्दुभेः ।
उत्कृत्य शिर आदाय स्वस्थं सौभं समाविशत् ॥ Bhā. P., X. 77. 25–27.

1. Ibid. IV. 10. 23–26.
2. Ibid. VIII. 10. 45–52.
3. .....अस्तौषीदादिपुरुषमिलायाः पुंस्त्वकाम्यया ।
तस्मै कामवरं तुष्टो भगवान् हरिरीश्वरः ॥
ददाविलाभवत् तेन सुद्युम्नः पुरुषर्षभः ॥ Ibid. IX. I. 21–22.
4. MBH. III. 190–194; Nārada Purāṇa 80.
5. Vinaya-piṭaka III. 35. (Oldenberg's edition Pārājika, I. 10. 6) Quoted from the article on 'Change of sex in Buddhist Literature' by Prof. P. V. Bapat in Dr. S. K. Belvalkar Felicitation Volume.

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change of sexual characters in a monk. The text adds that this change necessitated the removal of the monk from the order of Monks to that of the Nuns." Later in the same text is mentioned the case of a nun being transformed into a monk. This makes it clear that the composers of the Vinaya text were aware of the change of sexes and made provision for such occurrences in their text. In these texts the reason for the change is given as due to good or bad karma (good karma transforming one into a man and vice versa) or due to a strongly expressed aspiration for the change. A strongly expressed aspiration denotes strong will power and thus the belief that 'continued dwelling' on a certain change would produce that change has been accepted in both Hindu and Buddhist literature. Thus when the Bhāgavata Purāṇa attributes the change to Vasiṣṭha's prayers it could mean the strong will-power behind the change. It could have been a natural change also. In recent years we have come across numerous instances where there have been a gradual change in the sex of both males and females. Such changes are rare and unusual even today but people have come to view them scientifically. But not so in the age of the Purāṇas, and hence the religious explanation of this natural phenomenon-religion being the only acceptable and believable language of the time.

Kingship and polity

The society as depicted in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa believes in the king as the administrative head of a country. It is the king who protects the land and the absence of a king results in anarchy and disorder. In the fourth skandha it is said that "in the absence of a protector (in the form of a ruler) men were being reduced to the level of beasts." [1]

Duties of a king

The duties of a king are neatly expressed in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as "punishing the evil-doers, protecting the people, (against calamities) affording them means of subsistence and

1. Bhāg. P. IV. 14. 1; 39-40.

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keeping them severally within their bounds." [1] The importance of a king in looking after his subjects properly is stressed over and over again and Brahmā addressing Manu says that "the best service you will be doing to me will be through the governance of the people, O ruler of men, Lord Śrī Hari will be pleased with you when He sees you looking after your subjects." [2] And in the tenth skandha Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself addressing the brāhmaṇa sent by Rukmiṇī says "O brāhmaṇa, that king is my favourite in whose kingdom the subjects protected by him live happily." [3] And it does credit to our land to know that there were kings who treated their subjects as their own children. Talking of Dhruva the Bhāgavata says that "the people looked upon him as their own father who was thus possessed of a lofty character....." [4] Parīkṣit was another instance of a noble king in whose kingdom even animals were protected. It is heartening to hear Parīkṣit declare boldly that "the foremost duty of kings is to put an end to the suffering of the distressed." [5]

Minister

The king had his chief minister who was one of the seven prakṛtis who assisted him in his work. The prakṛtis are the high priest, the chief minister, the people, the fortress, the treasury, the police and the army. [6] Besides the chief minister there were other ministers as well, probably eight as mentioned in the Manu Smṛti [7] and the Mahābhārata. In fact certain passages indicate that the ministers had a voice in selecting the king. Thus in crowning Dhruva the king, it is

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1. अहं दण्डधरो राजा प्रजानामिह योजितः।
   रक्षिता वृत्तिदः स्वेषु सेतुषु स्थापिता पृथक् ॥ Bhā. P. IV. 21. 22.
2. Ibid. III. 13. 12.
3. Ibid. X. 52. 34.
4. तमेव शीलसम्पन्नं ब्रह्मण्यं दीनवत्सलम्।
   गोप्तारं धर्मसेतूनां मेनिरे पितरं प्रजाः ॥ Ibid. IV. 12. 12.
5. Ibid. I. 17. 11.
6. Ibid. VI. 14. 17–18.
7. मौलान्शास्त्रविदः शूरांल्लब्धलक्षान्कुलोद्भवान्।
   सचिवान्सप्त चाष्टौ वा प्रकुर्वीत परीक्षितान् ॥ Manu Smṛ. VII. 54.

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said that "the king made Dhruva the sovereign of the entire globe when he saw that the prince had not only come of age but had also won the esteem of the ministers." [1]

Fortresses

The fortresses were another important accessory of the king and protected the kingdom in times of war. When Kṛṣṇa was attacked by both Kālayavana and Jarāsandha he decided to protect the citizens from the calamities of war and hence built a strong fort which had every amenity provided in it. Houses, courtyards, gardens, stables for horses, grain stores and temples, etc. were provided within the fort and the citizens were housed in it. [2]

Insecurity of the king's position

The position of the king was not very secure and he had to be always on the alert. Attack from enemies was a constant danger and in the first skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it is said that "King Yudhiṣṭhira apprehending danger from His foes to Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent his army to serve as an escort to Him....." [3] Spies were freely employed both to report the condition in one's own kingdom as well as in other kingdoms. The kingdom had its traitors also who betrayed the secrets to another king. Thus Duryodhana makes reference to the existence of traitors when he abuses Vidura in the following words—"..... hostilely disposed towards the master on whose crumbs he had grown fat he works for the enemy's cause, etc." [4] Though Vidura here is not a traitor the statement makes it clear that the society was familiar with such men who helped other kingdoms at their own country's expense.

Bribery

Bribery was not unknown both in the political and economic sphere. When Kaśyapa was on his way to Parīkṣit's

1. .....वीक्ष्योढवयसं तं च प्रकृतीनां च सम्मतम् । etc. Bhā. P. IV. 9. 66.
2. Ibid. X. 50. 49 f.
3. Ibid. I. 10. 32.
4. क एनमत्रोपजुहाव जिह्मं दास्याः सुतं यद्बलिनैव पुष्टः ।
तस्मिन् प्रतीपः परकृत्य आस्ते निर्वास्यतामाशु पुराच्छ्वसानः ॥
Ibid. III. 1. 15.

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palace in order to cure him if bitten by the serpent Takṣaka, he was met by Takṣaka himself and bribing him with riches was asked to go back, which Kaśyapa did. [1] Takṣaka then accomplished his purpose.

War and weapons

War between rival kings was a perpetual threat to the security of the state and hence the king was always advised to keep his army strong. The army consisted of "chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers." [2] The weapons used in war were "iron clubs, swords, lances, pikes and axes, javelins, double-edged swords, Bhūṣuṇḍis, and arrows with many-coloured feathers." [3] The defeated kings paid tribute to their conqueror and were protected in turn by the conqueror. Aṅgiras questioning Citraketu asks him among other things whether "the tributary chiefs" were obedient to him. [4] Again in the fourth skandha it is said that "the kings against whom a monarch, out to conquer, marches, after listening to king Pṛthu's glory, bring tributes before him even as they did before Pṛthu." [5]

Code of war

War in those days had a definite code which every warrior respected. Thus it was forbidden for a true soldier to kill an enemy "who is drunk, unguarded, insane, asleep, tender of age, stupid, terror-stricken or fallen at his feet, nor would he kill a woman nor one who has lost one's chariot." [6] As in the days of "King Arthur and his knights" the warriors believed in chivalry and helped anyone in distress. Thus Yudhiṣṭhira addressing Arjuna asks him "I hope you never turned away any brāhmaṇa, child, cow, aged or ailing man, any woman or any creature whatsoever that might have

1. Quoted earlier in Chapter II.
2. Bhā. P. I. 16. 11.
3. Ibid. IV. 10. 11–12.
4. ……पौरा जानपदा भूपा आत्मजा वशवर्तिनः ॥ Ibid. VI. 14. 19.
5. Ibid. IV. 23. 36.
6. मत्तं प्रमत्तमुन्मत्तं सुप्तं बालं स्त्रियं जडम् ।
   प्रपन्नं विरथं भीतं न रिपुं हन्ति धर्मवित् ॥ Ibid. I. 7. 36.

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approached you for protection, etc." [1] An enemy who falls at the feet of his rival is at once forgiven. [2]

'One man against another man' was the rule. A single person should not be attacked by more than one person at a time and both should be equally armed. Thus when the Lord in His boar incarnation attacked Hiraṇyākṣa, it is said that the mace slipped out of His hand. Even though Hiraṇyākṣa had a fine opportunity of striking Him he refused to strike an unarmed foe. [3] This incidentally also shows that demons like Hiraṇyākṣa, Bali and Vṛtra, as narrated in different places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, were all possessed of a high moral order, sometimes surpassing the gods in their adherence to principles. Bali though warned by his preceptor against granting three steps to the disguised Lord insisted on standing by his word. [4] Vṛtra in a mortal combat with Indra keeps cool and balanced and expresses such profound truths as "whatever blessings in the form of (long) life, affluence, fame and power are coveted by a man are obtained by him at the time appointed for the same as surely as their contraries, even though he may be unwilling to have them. Therefore one should remain balanced in joy and sorrow proceeding (severally) from fame and disrepute, victory and defeat and even so from life and death. [5]

Barbarous massacre of the conquered was a thing unknown and though usually left alone as a tributary kingdom, on rare occasions they were disfigured by being shaved clean or leaving the beards and moustaches and shaving the head or again leaving their heads half-shaven. [6] Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described as having cut off the half portion of the hairs of Rukmin's head and beard with his sword. [7]

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1. कच्चित्त्वं ब्राह्मणं बालं गां वृद्धं रोगिणं स्त्रियम् ।
   पराजितो वाथ भवान्नोत्तमैर्नासमैः पथि ॥ etc. Bhā. P. I. 14. 41 f.
2. Ibid. 1. 17. 30.
3. Ibid. III. 19. 4.
4. Idid. VIII. 19. 30 ff. and VIII. 20. 1–3.
5. Ibid. VI. 12. 13–4.
6. Ibid. IX. 8. 6.
7. चैलेन बद्ध्वा तमसाधुकारिणं सश्मश्रुकेशं प्रवपन् व्यरूपयत् etc.
   Ibid. X. 54. 35.

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The warriors preferred death on the battlefield to defeat. Thus Vṛtra says "..... placed in the forefront of a battle a man should give up the ghost on the battlefield taking care not to turn back on the enemy." [1]

The Police

The police was another very important department in the state and helped the king in conducting his work efficiently. In the third skandha the messengers of death dragging a sinful soul to hell are compared "to the constables of a king dragging a convict to gaol." [2] The king was the judicial head and meted out punishment to the evil doers. [3] There were many kinds of evils present in the society. Robbery, gambling, cheating and theft were some of the common evils practised. [4] In the sixth skandha there is reference to some of the evil-doers in society; "a thief, a drinker (of spirituous liquor), one guilty of treachery to a friend, a brahman slayer, one sharing the bed of a preceptor's wife, a slayer of a woman, a king, one's own parent or a cow and whatever other sinners there may be." [5] The society was not free from scandal mongers is also proved by prayers such as "May Lord Yajña save me from public scandal. [6]

Daily rites of a king

It goes without saying that the king was very learned and it is said that "He alone who is well-versed in the Vedas and (other) sacred books is competent to command armies, rule over a kingdom, direct policies of war and exercise dominion over all the worlds." [7] The king had his daily rites to perform. Having arisen early in the morning he says his sandhyā prayers and pours oblations into the sacred fire. After bowing

1. "...कलेवरं योगरतो विजह्याद् यदग्रणीर्वीरशयेऽनिवृत्तः ॥ Ibid. VI. 10. 33.
2. Ibid. III. 30. 20.
3. Ibid. IV. 13. 22; IV. 16. 13–14.
4. Ibid. VI. 1. 22 ff.
5. स्तेनः सुरापो मित्रध्रुग्ब्रह्महा गुरुतल्पगः ।
   स्त्रीराजपितृगोहन्ता ये च पातकिनोऽपरे ॥ Ibid. VI. 2. 9.
6. Ibid. VI. 8. 18.
7. Ibid. IV. 22. 45.

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to the brāhmaṇas and bestowing gifts on them he salutes the elders in the house first. [1] Then his work for the day begins. The kings respected the sages and felt highly honoured whenever sages visited them. Thus Parīkṣit says "Men's houses are instantly purified by your remembrance, much more by your sight and touch, by washing your feet, offering a seat to you and so on." [2]

It is interesting to note that shaking hands was not unknown in ancient India. Thus in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa when Kṛṣṇa reached Dvārakā it is said that He pressed the hand of some who were there to welcome Him. [3]

Hospitality to guests was not just confined to royal households. Every family in the land treated its "unexpected visitor as the very incarnation of virtue and a guest as the incarnation of god Agni himself. [4]

Regal Splendour

The system of polygamy allowed the king a large number of wives. He lived in a palace built luxuriously and a description of such a palace is given in the fourth skandha. "Dhruva lived in that excellent palace built of most precious stones like a god in heaven. It was furnished with beds of ivory (soft and white) as the froth of milk and provided with coverings of gold. In its walls of crystal and emerald shone lights in the shape of bright gems placed in the hands of beautiful female figures carved in previous stones. Within the premises of the palace there were pleasure gardens charming with different species of celestial trees, resorted to by warbling pairs of birds and humming bees drunk with honey, etc." [5] The description of the palace also proves the skill which the craftsman had attained at the time. Inlaying stones and carving figures had all reached a high degree of perfection. Besides the many wives the king was allowed

1. Bhā. P. I. 13. 30.
2. Ibid. I. 19. 33; IV. 22. 4–6.
3. प्रह्वाभिवादनाश्लेषकरस्पर्शस्मितेक्षणैः, etc. Ibid. I. 11.22. cf. Bṛ. Up. III. 2. 13.
4. Ibid. VI. 7. 30.
5. Ibid. IV. 9. 60–64.

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to have concubines as well. [1] The main entertainment of the kings and rich men was hunting. [2] They also enjoyed watching wrestling matches as we find in the case of Kaṃsa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. [3] Puppet show was also a popular entertainment. [4]

Revenue

The revenue of the state was derived from land and trade and it is said that a just king "replenishes his royal treasury by collection of revenue when there is time for it and again expends it by free distribution at times of emergency, etc." [5]

Agriculture and cattle breeding

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Equally important was cattle-rearing as cattle played an important part in agricultural activity. Agricultural science was quite advanced and we come across statements like "being repeatedly sown (with seeds) a field will automatically become sterile. It will no more be capable of yielding crops, etc." in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. [6] Oxen were employed for threshing corn and also for carrying loads. "As the oxen revolve round the post in the middle of a threshing floor" is a simile used often in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. [7]

Horses and elephants being two important limbs of the army, care was taken to rear them properly. Camels and asses are also mentioned in this connection. [8]

The various weapons of war mentioned above were all made by indigenous workmen. The bow is mentioned to have been made out of the horns of the goat and the cow. [9]

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1. Bhā. P. III. 5. 20.
2. Ibid. X. 58. 15.
3. Ibid. X. 36. 21. 22.
4. Ibid. VI. 12. 10.
5. Ibid. IV. 16. 6.
6. Ibid. VII. 17. 33.
7. Ibid. IV. 12. 39; IV. 9. 20–21; V. 23. 3.
8. Ibid. X. 54. 8.
9. अग्निराजगवं चापं सूर्यो रश्मिमयानिषून् । etc. Ibid. IV. 15. 18.
   विस्फूर्जयन्नाजगवं धनुः स्वयं etc. Ibid. IV. 16. 23.

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Gold extraction

The art of extracting gold is clearly stated in the words "Just as a goldsmith acquainted with the process of extracting gold from its ore is able through those processes to find gold in the ore existing in gold mines, etc." [1] Gold ornaments were worn by both men and women and were made by indigenous goldsmiths. [2]

Familiarity with the sea

India had established trade with countries across the seas in very early times. She was thus familiar with the sea and with boats. Expressions like "just as a pilot is shown to those who seek to cross a turbulent sea," [3] "like a boat beaten by a blast" [4] and "the boat is the best protector of a person who is about to be drowned in the waters" [5] are common in the text.

Architecture

The description of palaces having walls inlaid with gems and passages like "king Pṛthu planned with due regard to propriety dwellings at different places and he founded villages, towns and cities, built castles and forts of every description, etc." [6] prove that architecture had made great progress at the time.

Preservation of dead bodies

It is interesting to observe that our ancients, like the ancient Egyptians, knew the art of preserving the dead body. Thus when Satyabhāmā's father was dead it is said that she put the dead body of her father in a jar of oil before going to Hastināpura. [7] That would preserve the body till she came back with Kṛṣṇa. In the fourth skandha Veṇa's mother is said to have preserved the dead body of her son by means of spells and other devices. [8]

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1. Ibid. VII. 7. 21.
2. Ibid. XI. 28. 19.
3. त्वं नः संदर्शितो धात्रा दुस्तरं निस्तितीर्षताम् ।
   कलिं सत्त्वहरं पुंसां कर्णधार इवार्णवम् ॥ Ibid. I. 1. 22.
4. Ibid. I. 5. 14.
5. Ibid. XI. 26. 32.
6. Ibid. IV. 18. 30 f.
7. Ibid. X. 57. 8.
8. Ibid. IV. 14. 35.

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Medicine

The science of medicine is very old in India and as early as in the Ṛgveda the Aśvins are mentioned as physicians of the gods. References to medicine are found often in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In one or two places there is mention of surgical operation as well. In the seventh skandha for instance it is said that "even an enemy (who is) beneficent as a medicine is a (veritable) son; while an inimical son though begotten by one's own body should be shunned as a disease. One should amputate that limb which is injurious to one's body and by removing which the rest of the body may survive." [1]

Manufacture of cloth

Clothes both cotton and silk were manufactured in India from ancient times. [2] The art of interlacing cloth with gold and the art of dyeing are mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.[3] In the tenth skandha a weaver is described as presenting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with cloth of various colours. [4]

Dress and decoration

This leads us to the dress and decoration of the people. The dress of the male and the female consisted of just a pair of clothes. Every man wore two pieces of cloth and the only difference between a king and a peasant, as far as clothes were concerned, was in the quality and texture of the cloth. Thus a king wore clothes which were costly and possibly were silken. Describing the dress of king Pṛthu the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says "He had on his person a pair of costly and excellent pieces of linen, one wrapped about his loins and the other slung across his right side and left shoulder." [5] In

1. परोऽप्यपत्यं हितकृद् यथौषधं स्वदेहजोऽप्यामयवत् सुतोऽहितः ।
छिन्द्यात् तदङ्गं यदुतात्मनोऽहितं शेषं सुखं जीवति यद्विवर्जनात् ॥
Bhā. P. VII. 5. 37.
2. Ibid. IV. 8. 48.
3. Ibid. IV. 7. 20; X. 41. 32.
4. ततस्तु वायकः प्रीतस्तयोर्वेषमकल्पयत् ।
विचित्रवर्णैश्चैलेयैराकल्पैरनुरूपतः ॥ Ibid. X. 41. 40.
5. Ibid. IV. 21. 17.

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the tenth skandha Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are described as "putting on two pieces of cloth each....." [1] Kṛṣṇa is described very often dressed in yellow silken robes. In one place he is depicted as "clad in yellow silk and adorned with a garland, etc." [2]

Sannyāsins and others who had renounced the world usually wore the bark of trees to cover their bodies. [3]

Head dress

Besides the pair of clothes the men also wore a head-dress. Kings usually wore their coronets even when going for battle. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa cut off the head of Naraka in battle it is said that "the head of king Naraka adorned with coronet and ear-rings fell down on the earth." [4] Others wore turbans and in II. 3. 21 it is said that "A head which, though decked with a silken turban or a crown never bows to Lord Mukunda is only a burden." [5] Again in the tenth skandha in the defeat of Rukmin's allies it is said that "the heads of millions of soldiers seated on cars, horses and elephants fell down on earth with their ear-rings, coronets and headgears." [6] A similar description is found in the first skandha as well. [7]

Ornaments worn by men

From the above it is clear that men used ear-rings. They also wore necklaces round the neck, keyūras on the arms and wristlets. [8] They also used scents to smear their bodies with and chief among them was sandal paste. [9]

Footwear

Sandals made of wood and leather were used as outfit. Among the presents that were brought to Pṛthu during his

1. Bhā. P. X. 41. 39.
2. Ibid. X. 32. 2.
3. Ibid. II. 2. 4.
4. Ibid. X. 59. 17.
5. भारः परं पट्टकिरीटजुष्टमप्युत्तमाङ्गं न नमेन्मुकुन्दम् ।
6. Ibid. X. 54. 5. 8.
7. Ibid. I. 15. 14.
8. Ibid. X. 38. 31.
9. Ibid. X. 42. 3–5.

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coronation are mentioned "a pair of wooden sandals." [1] In the seventh skandha it is said that "to a man ever contented in mind all directions are full of happiness (just) as there is security from gravel and thorns, etc. for him whose feet are protected by shoes," [2] making it clear that shoes were worn at the time.

Ladies' Outfit

The dress of women also consisted of a pair of clothes[3] The ornaments for the ladies were many and varied. There were "a gold ornament for the neck, bangles for the wrists, tinkling anklets round the ankles and a girdle of gold round the hips," [4] besides ear-rings for the ears. They also scented their bodies with sandal paste and oily substances. Describing the gopīs in their hurry to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Bhāgavata Purāṇa says ".....others who were daubing their person with sandal paste, etc. left that work half finished; still others who were rubbing and cleaning their person with oily substances decamped leaving off that work; and some who were painting their eyes with collyrium put off that work and ran to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa." [5] Besides these both men and women adorned themselves with flowers as well.

Food and drink

Rice

From the frequent allusion to rice boiled in milk in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa it seems that rice was the staple food of the people. Expressions like "cooked rice is the only expedient of maintaining the life" [6] also prove the same thing. Among other things these expressions lend support to the theory that the author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa was a South Indian.

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1. Bhā. P. IV. 15. 18.
2. Ibid. VII. 15. 17.
3. Ibid. VI. 18. 52. Ibid. III. 23. 28-29.
4. Ibid. III. 23. 31.
5. Ibid. X. 29. 5-11.
6. Ibid. XI. 26. 33.

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Meat

Meat eating has been referred to in many places. Mentioning the different kinds of food that Diti should abstain from while observing a vow it is said "she should not eat the leavings of what has been eaten by someone..... nor that which contains meat, etc." [1] showing that meat was ordinarily eaten. Now Diti was the wife of Kaśyapa, the brahman sage, and when meat-eating is mentioned in connection with this family it seems that meat eating was common. But the stress on ahiṁsā as we have already noticed indicates a gradual change from non-vegetarianism to vegetarianism. Passages like "one who knows the essence of piety should not offer meat (to the manes) in a śrāddha ceremony nor should he eat it (himself). The type of supreme gratification caused (to the manes as well as the Lord Himself) through cereals fit for anchorites is never brought about through the killing of animals," show the gradual change which was taking place in the food habits of the people.

Fish

Fishing and fish-eating are mentioned in some places in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the eleventh skandha a fisherman is described as having "caught that fish (which had swallowed the remnant of the iron mace which killed Śrī Kṛṣṇa) along with other fishes in the net." [2] That hooks were used for fishing is indicated by the statement "weak people meet with death as the fishes die through hooks." [3] Describing the story of how Pradyumna was recovered from the inside of a fish the Purāṇa says : "Pradyumna was devoured by a huge fish. Sometime later this fish along with other fishes was caught in a net and was carried away by the fishermen. These fishermen then made a present of this fish unto the daitya Śambara. The fish was then taken into the kitchen room of the daityas where the cooks while cutting the fish into pieces found out the wonderful boy in the fish, etc."[4]

1. Bhā. P. IV. 18. 49.
2. Ibid. XI. 1. 23–4.
3. Ibid. XI. 8. 19.
4. Ibid. X. 55. 4–6.

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Cannibals

It is interesting to note that in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa we come across reference to cannibals, though they are normally ogres and demons. King Saudāsa, being turned into an ogre through a curse, is described as killing and eating a brahman "just as a tiger would devour a beast." [1]

Drinking

Drinking was indulged in freely and the Yādavas as a race were notorious as drunkards and are reported to have killed one another in a drunken brawl. [2] Their over-indulgence in liquor is commented upon by Śiśupāla in Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrificial hall when Kṛṣṇa was chosen as the foremost among men. [3] References like "even as a man blinded by intoxication caused by spirituous liquor sees not whether the cloth wrapped round his loins is still there, etc." [4] are common. Nārada describes himself as having been 'constantly drunk and excessively fond of women' in a previous birth. [5] Among many types of liquor there was one called Mairekha as well. [6]

In spite of all that has been said above the tendency to give up intoxicating drinks was manifesting itself. The change both in flesh eating and drinking spirituous liquor has been working slowly right from the Upaniṣadic times to the Manu Smṛti and we find its echo in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also. This is very well expressed in the eleventh skandha where it is said that "To go to a woman in marriage, to slay animals in a sacrifice and to drink in the Suragraha ceremony are sanctioned by the scriptures. But to desist from all these actions leads to their paramount well-being." This compares well with the Manu Smṛti which says "There is no sin in eating meat, in drinking (spirituous) liquor or in carnal intercourse, for that is the natural way of created beings; but abstention brings great rewards." [7]

1. Bhā. P. IX. 9. 33.
2. Ibid. III. 4. 1.
3. Ibid. X. 74. 36.
4. Ibid. III. 28. 47.
5. Ibid. VII. 15. 70.
6. Ibid. X. 30. 12–13.
7. Manu Smṛ. V. 56.

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APPENDIX

The author of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as a great Vedic scholar

The presence of many archaic words and passages which bear comparison to the Upaniṣads (and Gītā) in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa indicate the great erudition of the author in the Vedic literature.

The fifth skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is written mostly in prose and what is significant is that this prose resembles the prose of the Brāhmaṇas.[1] Expressions like 'Rudrabhāga' and the presence of legends like that of Śunaḥśepa and Nābhāga also prove the same thing.[2] The introduction of verses after some prose passages with the words 'tasya ha vā, etc. ślokaḥ' and similar statements reveal that the author tries to imitate the style of the Brāhmaṇas.[3]

A few examples of the archaic words used in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa are given below.

The word '*śravas*' has been used a number of times in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the Veda '*śravas*' has the sense of 'fame', 'food' and in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also it is used in

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1. a यर्हि वाव ह राजन् स राजपुत्रः प्रियव्रतः etc. Bhā. P. V. 1. 6.
   b. तस्यामु ह वा आत्मजान् स राजवर etc. Ibid., V. 2. 19.
   Cf. त्वां ह वाव मह्यं तताभाक्षुरिति।
   ततो वै ते प्र यज्ञमजानन् etc. Aita. Brāh. 22. 9.
2. a. एष ते रुद्रभागोऽस्तु यदुच्छिष्टोऽध्वरस्य वै।
   यज्ञस्ते रुद्र भागेन कल्पतामद्य यज्ञहन्॥ Bhā. P. IV. 6. 53.
   b. The Śunaḥśepa legend has been discussed in Chapter III.
   c. The legend of—Nābhāga
   Bhā. P. IX. 4. 1–11. Ait. Brāh. 22. 9.
3. a. यस्य ह पाण्डवेय श्लोकावुदाहरन्ति—को नु तत कर्म etc.
   Bhā. P. V. 4. 6. ff.
   b. तस्यानुगुणाञ् श्लोकान् गायन्ति—अहो भुवः सप्तसमुद्रवत्या etc. etc.
   Ibid., V. 6. 13 ff.
   Cf. एतेन ह वा ऐन्द्रेण महाभिषेकेण तुरः कावषेयो जनमेजयं पारिक्षितमभिषिषे च।
   तदेषाऽभियज्ञगाथा गीयते —आसन्दीवति, etc. Aita. Brāh. 39. 7.

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the same sense. But there are other words like *apīcya* which are used in a different meaning in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Thus '*apīcya*' means something hidden or secret in the Vedas whereas here in the Purāṇa it means beautiful. The verses where such archaic words occur have been given in the following pages.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa.	Vedic Literature.
श्रवस्	**श्रवस्**
अथ तं सुखमासीनं उपासीनं बृहच्छ्रवाः । देवर्षिः प्राह विप्रर्षिं वीणापाणिः स्मयन्निव ॥ I. 5. 1.	उत स्मैनं वस्त्रमथिं न तायुमनु क्रोशन्ति क्षितयो भरेषु । नीचायमानं जसुरिं न श्येनं श्रवश्चाच्छा पशुमच्च यूथम् ॥ RV. IV. 38. 5.
अतो महाभाग भवानमोघदृक् शुचिश्रवाः सत्यरतो धृतव्रत : etc. I. 5. 13.	ते नो गृणाने महिनी महि श्रवः क्षत्रं द्यावापृथिवी धासथो बृहत्, etc. Ibid., I. 160. 5.
तस्मिंस्तदा लब्धरुचेर्महामुने प्रियश्रवस्यस्खलिता मतिर्मम, etc. I. 5. 27.	अभि यो महिना दिवं मित्रो बभूव सप्रथाः । अभि श्रवोभिः पृथिवीम् ॥ Idid., III. 59. 7.
प्रयातः स्वबीर्याणि तीर्थोपादः प्रियश्रवाः, etc. I. 6. 34.	Sāyaṇa gives the meaning of श्रवस् as श्रवः अन्नं कीर्तिर्वा।
... ... लोकस्य सद्यो विधुनोति कल्मषं तस्मै सुभद्रश्रवसे नमो नमः ॥ II. 4. 15.	

Some more verses are II. 4. 16; II. 4. 17; II. 7. 15; I. 8. 46. In all these instances **श्रवस्** means fame. Thus explaining **सुभद्रश्रवसे** in II. 4. 15. Śrīdhara says **सुमङ्गलं यशः यस्य तस्मै ।**

गोपीथाय	**गोपीथाय**
अजातशत्रुः पृतनां गोपीथाय मधुद्विषः । परेभ्यः शङ्कितः स्नेहात्प्रायुङ्क्त चतुरङ्गिणीम् ॥ I. 10. 32.	प्रति त्यं चारुमध्वरं गोपीथाय प्र हूयसे । मरुद्भिरग्न आ गहि ॥ RV. I. 19, 1.
गोपीथाय रक्षणाय इति श्रीधरः ।	गोपीथाय सोमपानाय इति सायणः ।

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अपीच्य

श्यामं सदापीच्यवयोऽङ्गलक्ष्म्या स्त्रीणां मनोज्ञं रुचिरस्मितेन, etc. I. 19. 28 Also X. 47. 2.

अपीच्यवयोऽङ्गलक्ष्म्या अति सुन्दरं वयः तस्य अङ्गलक्ष्मीः तया इति श्रीधरः ।

राधस्

नमो नमस्तेऽस्त्वृषभाय सात्वतां विदूरकाष्ठाय मुहुः कुयोगिनाम् । निरस्तसाम्यातिशयेन राधसा स्वधामनि ब्रह्मणि रंस्यते नमः ॥ II. 4. 14.

राधसा ऐश्वर्येण इति श्रीधरः ।

पेशस्

श्यामावदाताः शतपत्रलोचनाः पिशङ्गवस्त्राः सुरुचः सुपेशसः etc. II. 9. 11. पेशस् means रूप or form.

नृम्णम्

तरुणं रमणीयाङ्गमरुणोष्ठेक्षणाधरम् । प्रणताश्रयणं नृम्णं शरण्यं करुणार्णवम् ॥ IV. 8. 46.

नृम्णं सुखकरं देवम् इति श्रीधरः ।

चर्षणी

स चर्षणीनामुदगाच्छुचो मृजन् प्रियः प्रियाया इव दीर्घदर्शनः ॥ X. 21. 2.

चर्षणीनां प्रजानामिति श्रीधरः ।

अपीच्य

तदस्यानीकमुत चारु, नामापीच्यं वर्धते नप्तुरपाम् । etc. Rv. II. 35. 11.

अपीच्यमिति अन्तर्हितनाम इति सायणः ।

राधस्

मन्दन्तु त्वा मघवन्निन्द्रेन्दवो राधोदेयाय सुन्वते । आमुष्या सोममपिबश्चमू सुतं ज्येष्ठं तर्धिषे सहः ॥ Ibid., VIII. 4. 4.

राधोदेयाय राधसो धनस्य दानार्थमिति सायणः ।

पेशस्

उपेमसृक्षि वाजयुर्वचस्यां चनो दधीत नाद्यो गिरो मे । अपां नपादाशुहेमा कुवित्स सुपेशसस्करति जोषिषद्धि ॥ Ibid., II. 35. 1.

सुपेशसः शोभनरूपान् शोभनालंकारान् वा इति सायणः ।

नृम्णम्

यो जात एव प्रथमो मनस्वान्देवो देवान्क्रतुना पर्यभूषत् । यस्य शुष्माद्रोदसी अभ्यसेतां नृम्णस्य मह्ना स जनास इन्द्रः ॥ Ibid., II., 12. 1.

नृम्णस्य सेनालक्षणस्य बलस्य इति सायणः ।

चर्षणी

मित्रस्य चर्षणीधृतोऽवो देवस्य सानसि । द्युम्नं चित्रश्रवस्तमम् ॥ Ibid., III. 59. 6.

चर्षणीधृतः मनुष्याणां वृष्टिप्रदानेन धारकस्य इति सायणः ।

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शुष्मम्

तस्यानुधावतो रेतश्चस्कन्दामोघरेतसः। शुष्मिणो यूथपस्येव वासितामनुधावतः॥ VII. 12. 32.

शुष्मिणः मत्तस्य इति श्रीधरः।

शुष्मम्

स इद्राजा प्रतिजन्यानि विश्वा शुष्मेण तस्थावभि वीर्येण। बृहस्पतिं यः सुभृतं बिभर्ति वल्गूयति वन्दते पूर्वभाजम्॥ Rv. IV. 50. 7.

शुष्ममिति बलनाम इति सायणः।

उक्थ

यस्य क्षणवियोगेन लोको ह्यप्रियदर्शनः। उक्थेन रहितो ह्येष मृतकः प्रोच्यते यथा॥ I. 15. 6.

उक्थेन प्राणेन इति श्रीधरः।

उक्थ

ता वा ता भद्रा उषसः पुरासुरभिष्टिद्युम्ना ऋतजातसत्याः। यास्वीजानः शशमान उक्थैः स्तुवञ्छंसन्द्रविणं सद्य आप॥ Ibid., IV. 51. 7.

उक्थैः मन्त्रैः इति सायणः।

अदभ्र

पश्यन्त्यदो रूपमदभ्रचक्षुषा सहस्रपादोरुभुजाननाद्भुतम्। etc. I. 3. 4.

The Viṣṇu sūkta underlies the whole of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and words like **उरुक्रम, उरुगाय** are used quite often.

अदभ्र

परिह्वृतेदना जनो युष्मादत्तस्य वायति। देवा अदभ्रमाशवो यमादित्या अहेतनानेहसो व ऊतयः सुऊतयो व ऊतयः॥ Ibid., VIII. 47. 6.

दभ्रम् ह्रस्वः अल्पम् अदभ्रं अनल्पमिति सायणः।

उरुक्रमः

कालसंज्ञां तदा देवीं बिभ्रच्छक्तिमुरुक्रमः। त्रयोविंशति तत्त्वानां गणं युगपदाविशम्॥ III. 6. 2.

Also verses III. 9. 8; II. 3. 20; II. 7. 18.

उरुक्रमः

तदस्य प्रियमभि पाथो अश्यां नरो यत्र देवयवो मदन्ति। उरुक्रमस्य स हि बन्धुरित्था विष्णोः पदे परमे मध्व उत्सः॥ Ibid., I. 154. 5.

उरुगाय

त्वं भावयोगपरिभावितहृत्सरोज आस्से श्रुतेक्षितपथो ननु नाथ पुंसाम्। यद् यद् धिया त उरुगाय विभावयन्ति तत् तद् वपुः प्रणयसे सदनुग्रहाय॥ III. 9. 11.

उरुगाय

ता वां वास्तून्युश्मसि गमध्यै यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः। अत्राह तदुरुगायस्य वृष्णः परमं पदमव भाति भूरि॥ Ibid., 154. 6.

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उरुगाय

Verse II. 7. 40. of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa recalls the Viṣṇu Sūkta of the Ṛgveda to reader.

विष्णोर्नु वीर्यगणनां कतमोऽर्हतीह यः पार्थिवान्यपि कविर्विममे रजांसि । चस्कम्भ यः स्वरंहसास्खलता त्रिपृष्ठं यस्मात् त्रिसाम्यसदनादुरु कम्पयानम् ॥ II. 7. 40.

उरुगाय

विष्णोर्नु कं वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि । यो अस्कभायदुत्तरं सधस्थं विचक्रमाणस्त्रेधोरुगायः ॥ Ibid., I. 154. 1.

Words which conform to Vedic grammar also form part of the Bhāgavata purāṇa.

आत्मन्, भस्मन् etc. in the sense of आत्मनि, भस्मनि

कालं कर्म स्वभावं च मायेशो मायया स्वया । आत्मन् यदृच्छया प्राप्तं बिभ्रुभूषुरुपाददे ॥ II. 5. 21.

कुर्वन्ति हि त्वयि रतिं कुशलाः स्व आत्मन् नित्यप्रिये पतिसुतादिभिरार्तिदैः किम् । etc. X. 29.33.

तद् वै धनुस्त···सर्वं क्षणेन तदभूदसदीशरिक्तं भस्मन् हुतं कुहकराद्धमिवोप्तमूष्याम् ॥

Aṣṭādhyāyī,

सुपांसुलुक्पूर्वसवर्णा···VII. 1. 39.

प्रतिहर्तवे in the sense of प्रतिहर्तुम् ।

नत् ते वयं लोकसिसृक्षया···न शक्नुमस्तत्प्रतिहर्तवे ते ॥ III. 6. 47.

तुमर्थे सेसेनसेऽसेन्क्सेकसेनध्यैअध्यैन्कध्यैन्कध्यैशध्यैशध्यैन्तवैतवेङ्तवेनः ॥ Ibid., III. 4. 9.

समानकर्तृकयोः पूर्वकाले Ibid., III. 4. 21

समासेऽनञ्पूर्वे क्त्वो ल्यप् । Ibid., VII. 1. 37.

According to these Sūtras the words should be संरुह्य and निवेश्य । Thus संरोहयित्वा etc. are archaic usages.

संरोहयित्वा, निवेशयित्वा for संरुह्य and निवेश्य

वंशं कुरोर्वंशदवाग्निनिर्हतं संरोहयित्वा भवभावनो हरिः । निवेशयित्वा निजराज्य ईश्वरो युधिष्ठिरं प्रीतमना बभूव ह ॥ I. 10. 2.

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उरुगाय

In the Veda when the upasarga is compounded with the verb then क्त्वा is used otherwise it is ल्यप्।

Words like तनुवा for तन्वा and अकारषम्। (I. 6. 5.) for अकार्षम् are also archaic forms. This is a philological rule known as svarabhakti where a vowel is inserted between a conjunt letter for the ease of pronuciation.

It has been already mentioned in the thesis that the Gītā is the bhāṣya of the Upaniṣads and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa is the bhāṣya of the Gītā. Some more examples (other than those given in the course of the eight chapters) are given below.

As early as in the Ṛgveda we find that the human mind was leaning towards socialism. Thus in the tenth maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda it is said that one who eats alone (without sharing it with others) becomes a sinner. This same vedic idea is expressed in a simpler form in the third adhyāya of the Bhagavad Gītā. (III. 13). According to the Gītā 'yajña or sacrifice' is not the ritual of the brāhmaṇas but a sacrifice which is for universal good. Thus in the above verse the Gītā extols the man who eats what is left after the performance of a sacrifice. The sacrifice here is for the good of the whole mankind. Thus the man who does the sacrifice thinks of all his fellow men and provides them with the means for food before he thinks of himself. At the same time the Gītā condemns that man who thinks only of himself and cooks and eats alone without a thought for his fellew beings. We now come to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In VII. 14. 8. The Bhāgavata condemns in strong words one who hoards wealth. It states unequivocally that a man has a right to only as much as fills his

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stomach. And a person who claims more is a thief and should be punished. Thus the Bhāgavata Purāṇa not only substantiates the statement of the Gītā but goes further and brands the violater a thief who deserves punishment at the hands of law.

Statements proclaiming the identity of the individual soul and the supreme soul are found throughout the Upaniṣadic literature. Thus in the Īśopaniṣad, mantra 6, it is said that "he who sees all beings in himself and himself in all others has no cause for sorrow." Though the main idea is clear in such statements the entire purport can be grasped only with difficulty. And it is this special characteristic of the Upaniṣads which later gave rise to different schools of Vedānta.

But when we approach the Gītā the very same idea is simplified and stated clearly in the sixth adhyāya in verses 29 and 30. In verse No. 29 Bhagavān tells Arjuna that 'that yogī who has attained equanimity and looks upon all things alike sees his own self in others and also others in his own self.' Thinking that this is not clear enough Bhagavān adds a personal touch and says "he who sees Me in everything or everywhere, and everything in Me to him I am eternal and so is he." Bhagavān foresees the difficulty in the conception of all being as existing in Himself and makes it clear by giving a concrete example (IX. 6) : "Just as ether which is spread everyhwhere (and originates in space) remains in space itself so also the entire creation (which originated from Me) should be known to exist in Me."

In the eleventh skandha of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (XI. 2. 45, 48, 50, 51, 52) this idea of unity in diversity is stated clearly and the spiritual aspirant is asked to devote himself to Vāsudeva, the supreme spirit behind all this apparent diversity. Thus XI. 2. 45 relates that "he who sees in all being the existence of Bhagavān as in his own self and sees all beings in Bhagavān within himself is the highest Bhāgavata." Bhagavān is all encompassing and hence the Bhāgavata Purāṇa exhorts the devotee to meditate on Bhagavān without geeting attached to unreal objects. "The highest Bhāgavata (devotee) does not know 'mine' and 'thine' either in wealth or in body. He looks upon all beings with equal eyes. His mind is always at peace." (Quoted in chapter II. p. 83. foot-note[1]).

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This unity is again clearly expressed in the seventh skandha where it said that 'The great tree in the shape of the egg-shaped universe is crowded with multitudes of Jīvas (embodied souls). He being the root of this tree, to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is to gratify all living beings as well as one's own self.' Here in the Bhāgavata the idea is made clear by bringing in the analogy of a tree and its roots.

Vedic Literature.

केवलाघो भवति केवलादी ॥
Rv. X. 117. 6.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति । सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥
Īśa. up. 6.

Bhagavad Gītā.

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः । यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ III. 14.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः । भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ III. 13.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि । ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति । तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ VI. 29–30

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् । तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ IX. 6.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

यावद् भ्रियेत जठरं तावत् स्वत्वं हि देहिनाम् । अधिकं योऽभिमन्येत स स्तेनो दण्डमर्हति ॥ VII. 14. 8.

सर्वभूतेषु यः पश्येद् भगवद्भावमात्मनः । भूतानि भगवत्यात्मन्येष भागवतोत्तमः ॥ गृहीत्वापीन्द्रियैरर्थान् यो न द्वेष्टि न हृष्यति । विष्णोर्मायामिदं पश्यन् स वै भागवतोत्तमः ॥ XI.2. 45 & 48.

जीवराशिभिराकीर्णे आण्डकोशाङ्घ्रिपो महान् । तन्मूलत्वादच्युतेज्या सर्वजीवात्मतर्पणम् ॥ VII. 14. 36.

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There are many verses in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa which bear comparison to the thoughts expressed in vedic literature (mainly the Upaniṣads) and the Gītā. A few of them are given below :

Bhāgavata Purāṇa.	Upaniṣads.	Bhāgavad Gītā.
न ते विदुः स्वार्थगतिं हि विष्णुं दुराशया ये बहिरर्थमानिनः। अन्धा यथान्धैरुपनीयमाना वाचीशतन्त्यामुरुदाम्नि बद्धाः ॥ VII. 5. 31.	अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितम्मन्यमानाः। दन्द्रम्यमाणाः परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥ Kaṭha. Up. I. 2. 5. Also Muṇḍ. Up. I. 2. 8.	
एवं पुष्पितया वाचा व्याक्षिप्तमनसां नृणाम्। मानिनां चातिस्तब्धानां मद्वार्तापि न रोचते ॥ XI. 21. 34.		यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः। वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ II. 42.
आत्मावास्यमिदं विश्वं यत् किंचिज्जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥ VIII. 1. 10.	ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥ Īśa. Up. I.	

Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि दृष्ट एवात्मनीश्वरे।
I. 2. 21.

Also XI. 20. 30.

स एवं स्वान्तरं निन्ये युगानामेकसप्ततिम्। वासुदेवप्रसङ्गेन परिभूतगतित्रयः॥
III. 22. 36.

क्रीडस्यमोघसंकल्प ऊर्णनाभिर्यथोर्णुते।
तथा तद्विषयां धेहि मनीषां मयि माधव॥
II. 9. 27.

Also II. 5. 5; III. 21. 9; IV. 6. 43 and XI. 9. 21. repeat the analogy of the spider.

भ्रश्यत्यनुस्मृतिश्चित्तं ज्ञानभ्रंशः स्मृतिक्षये। तद्रोधं कवयः प्राहुरात्मापह्नवमात्मनः॥
IV. 22. 31.

Upaniṣads.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः। क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे॥ Muṇḍ. up. II. 2. 8.

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति। यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि तथाक्षरात्सम्भवतीह विश्वम्॥ Muṇḍ. up. I. 1. 7.

Bhagavad Gītā.

The threefold destiny referred to is the same as mentioned in the Gītā. ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः। जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः॥
XIV. 18.

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः। स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति॥ *II. 63.*

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विमुञ्चति यदा कामान् मानवो मनसि स्थितान् । तर्ह्येव पुण्डरीकाक्ष भगवत्त्वाय कल्पते ॥ VII. 10. 9.

वृत्त्या स्वभावकृतया वर्तमानः स्वकर्मकृत् । हित्वा स्वभावजं कर्म शनैर्निर्गुणतामियात् ॥ VII. 11. 32.

यावद्धतोऽस्मि हन्तास्मीत्यात्मानं मन्यतेऽस्वद्दृक् । etc. X. 4. 22.

श्रुत्वा पर्जन्यनिनदं मण्डूका व्यसृजन् गिरः । तूष्णीं शयानाः प्राग् यद्वद् ब्राह्मणा नियमात्यये । X. 20. 9.

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥ Kaṭha. up. 1. 2. 19.

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् । etc. Kaṭha. up. II. 3. 14.

संवत्सरं शशयाना ब्राह्मणा व्रतचारिणः । वाचं पर्जन्यजिन्वितां प्र मण्डूका अवादिषुः ॥ RV. VII. 103. 1.

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः । स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ XVIII. 45.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ॥ etc. II. 19.

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GENERAL INDEX

A

Āgamas, 139, 269
Agastya, 103
Aghāsura, 73
Agni, 96, 97, 103–5, 108, 175, 183, 208, 311
Ahalyā, 62
Ahalyābai, 267
Āhavanīya, 105
Ahiṁsā, 208
Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā, 98, 201, 210, 250
Āhūti, 274
Aitareya Āraṇyaka, 120
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 104–6, 108–9, 111, 114–5, 117, 184
Aiyangar, S. K., 221
Aja 54
Ajāmīla, 7, 42, 60–2, 147–8, 290
Ajanābha, 36
Ajīgarta, 102, 104, 106–9
Ajita, 35
Ājñācakra, 20
Akrūra, 78–9, 187, 213
Ākūti, 27, 33, 46
Alakanandā, 259
Alīnas, 100
Allāhabad, 219
Aloka, 38
Ālvārs, 10, 220–2, 225–6, 229–31, 260
Ambā, 65
Ambālikā, 65
Ambarīṣa, 48, 51, 108, 110, 141–4, 154, 254
Ambikā, 298
America, 3
Aśma, 194
Aṁśumān, 52
Aṁśumatī, 120
Aṁtalikita, 189
Ānandagiri, 13
Ānandatīrtha, 235
Ānandapadmanābhaswāmy, 268
Ānandavardhana, 123–4
Ananta, 41, 135, 210, 219, 226
Anantajit, 35
Anantaśaya, 249
Anantaswāmin, 219
Anantāvarma, 219
Ānarta, 48
Ànava, 59
Ānava Adhīratha, 67
Āndāl, 221, 226–8, 230, 250, 260
Andhaka, 67, 194
Āndhra, 67, 85, 160
Anenas, 57
Aṅga, 67, 113, 295
Aṅgada, 55
Aṅgiras, 37, 308
Aṅgirasa, 122
Antaryāmin, 179
Aniruddha, 17, 133, 198, 200, 202–3, 211–2, 252
Anu, 58, 67
Anugītā, 133, 198, 203, 205, 209
Anukramaṇī, 120, 122
Anuloma, 274
Anuśāsanaparvan (MBH), 109–10
Aparārka, 11

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Aparājita, 138
Aphsad, 218
Aptoryama, 267
Arabian Sea, 113
Aranātha, 35
Āraṇyakas, 176, 185, 198
Ariṣṭanemi, 35
Arjuna, 16, 66, 74, 80, 82, 85–6, 113–4, 146, 155, 162–4, 182, 186, 191, 194, 205, 210, 272–3, 277, 295, 308
Ārṣa, 273
Aruṇa, 40
Aryaman, 208, 299
Asamañjas, 52
Aśoka, 119, 214
Aśmaka, 53–4
Aśmaki, 68
Asramaka, 217
Assam, 117, 128, 248, 275
Aṣṭādhyāyī, 186
Aṣṭaka, 110
Aśvaghoṣa, 117
Aśvakrānta, 249
Aśvatthāmā, 15, 251
Aśvins, 105, 175, 314
Atala, 19, 41
Atharvaveda, 96–7, 101, 104, 118, 146, 195, 303
Ātman, 23, 30–1, 74, 177, 179, 234, 246, 254
Ātmavidyā, 27
Atris, 113
Aurangabad, 54
Aurangazeb, 265
Aurva, 116, 280
Avabhṛta, 105
Avanti, 122
Avantipura, 78
Āyarpādī, 125
Āyati, 57
Ayodhyā, 49, 56, 59, 108, 113, 279
Āyu, 56–7
Āyurveda, 57

B

Babylon, 21
Badari, 84
Badrinath, 259
Bagali, (Bellary), 259
Baghelakhand, 217
Baghera (Rajasthan), 265
Bahlika, 65
Bāhuka 52, 280
Bakāsura, 72
Bālāji, 266
Baladeva, 9
Balarāma, 9, 28, 69, 72, 78–9, 125, 130, 171, 268, 301–2, 314–5
Bālakāṇḍa (Rāma.), 117
Bali, 27, 45, 67, 187, 295, 303–4 309
Bālika (Mūlaka), 54
Ballālasena, 11
Bāṇa, 220
Barabar Hill, 219
Bareilly, 61
Belava, 238
Belūr, 253, 260
Belvādi, 258, 263
Bengal, 67, 123, 125–6, 236, 239–41
Besnagar, 189, 214
Bhadrakālī, 297–8
Bhadrāśva, 37, 50
Bhaga, 195
Bhagalpur, 67
Bhāgavata, 82–3, 186–90, 194–6, 201, 206–7, 209, 214, 220

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Bhāgavata cult (See under Pāñcarātra cult),
Bhāgavata Bhāvārtha Dīpikā, 8
Bhagīratha, 53, 150
Bhagvān Dās, 73
Bhairava, 297
Bhajamāna, 67
Bhāji, 67
Bhakti, 32, 84, 154, 174, 180 f.
Bhakti yoga, 31, 32, 84, 160, 175, 234
Bhalānas, 100
Bhandārkar, A. D., 8, 120, 122
Bhandārkar, R. G., 191–2, 236
Bharadvāja, 60, 284
Bharata, 35–7, 54, 59–60, 77, 121, 161, 171, 274, 302
Bhāratavarṣa, 36–8, 55, 59
Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa, 124
Bhavabhūti, 53
Bhaya, 277
Bhīma, 66–7, 80, 274
Bhīmarathi, 266–8
Bhīmasātvata, 55, 67
Bhīṣma, 15, 65, 81, 291, 302
Bhītari (U. P.), 215
Bhoja, 67–8
Bhojavarman, 238
Bhopal, 220
Bhṛgu (Bhārgava), 91, 102, 108, 110, 113–7, 119, 255–8
Bhūdevī, 257, 261, 263, 264, 269
Bhujaṅgavalaya, 266
Bhūr, 19, 39
Bhūrisena, 48
Bhūtas, 99
Bhūtasūkṣma, 22
Bhūtavaṭa, 99
Bhūtī, 99, 199, 203
Bhuvar, 19, 39
Bible, 193
Bijapur, 118
Bilhari, 265
Bina, 217
Bindumatī, 59
Bodhisattva, 44
Bombay, 238
Brahmā, 20–2, 27–30, 33, 45, 82, 89, 94, 98, 103, 135, 139–40, 143, 145, 180–1, 202, 204, 210, 255–8, 269–70, 287, 306
Brāhma, 273
Brahmaloka, 138
Brahman, 26, 82, 85, 89, 133, 135–6, 139–40, 143, 146, 152, 170, 177, 179–80, 195–6, 198–9, 232–7, 254
Brahman (Nirguṇa), 167
Brahman, (Saguṇa), 167
Brāhmaṇas, 176, 181, 183–5, 189–90
Brahmāṇḍa, 21
Brahmaputra, 249
Brahmarandhra, 20
Brahmāstra, 15
Brahmasūtra, 13
Brahmatantra, 138
Brahmavādinī, 286
Brāhmī, 218
Bṛhaddevatā, 107
Bṛhadratha, 66–7, 113
Bṛhadvasu, 62
Bṛhannāradīya, 11
Bṛhaspati, 60, 86, 88, 197, 198, 205, 248, 284
Bṛhatsaṁhitā, 253
Bṛndāvan see Vṛndāvan,

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Buddha, 4, 12–3, 28, 35, 180, 207, 209–10
Buddhacarita, 117
Buddhism (Buddhist), 28, 44, 83, 180–1, 186, 194–5, 190, 207–8, 214, 304–5
Budha (Mercury), 40, 55
Budhagupta, 218
Burnouf, 7

C

Caitanya, 125–6, 150, 155, 160, 214, 238–41, 250, 301
Cakraswamin, 238
Caldwell, 220
Cāṇakya, 85
Candrabhāga, 262, 264, 298
Candra, 218, 255–7
Candracakra, 55
Candragupta, 85
Candraprabha, 35
Candravarman, 238
Candrāvatī (Rajasthan), 262, 264
Cānūra, 28
Cape Comorin, 118–9
Carmaṇvatī (Chambal), 58
Carpenter Jarl, 119
Caturbhuja, 264
Chanda Ram prasad, 192
Chattarpur Bundelkhand, 264
Chatterji, J. C., 203
Chāyā, 46
Chedi, 65, 68
Chinese, 14
Chitor, 243
Chola, 227
Christ, 188, 192
Christoph-von Furer Haimendorf, 276
Chronos, 21
Citraketu, 42, 55, 300, 308
Citrāṅgada, 65
Citraratha, 59, 113
Citraśikhaṇḍin, ṛṣis, 197
Colebrooke, 7
Cushite (Hamitic), 95
Cyavana, 62, 115–6

D

Dadhici, 90–1, 94–5
Dakṣa, 33, 88–98, 102, 285, 296, 299
Dākṣāyaṇī, 92
Dakṣiṇā, 275–6
Damaghoṣa, 68
Dambha, 277
Dāmodara, 212, 252
Daṇḍa, 49
Daṇḍaka, 49, 212
Dantavaktra, 7, 43, 157, 159
Daśarājña, 53, 113
Daśaratha, 54
Dās gupta, 183
Dattātreya, 27, 209, 256
Deogarh (U. P.), 219, 268
Devahūti, 27, 30–3, 233, 273, 282
Devayāna, 44
Devayānī, 57–58, 273
Devakī, 68–71, 78, 155, 185, 287, 298
Devamīḍhuṣa, 68
Devāpī, 64–5
Devarāta, 92, 103, 109–10
Devaśraddhā, 67
Devī, 266
Devī Bhāgavata, 11, 111, 152
Dhamnar (M. P.), 269
Dhanvantari, 28, 57

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Dhanyaviṣṇu, 217–8
Dharma, 27–8, 197
Dharmanātha, 35
Dhārṣṭas, 47
Dhṛṣṭa, 46–7
Dhṛṣṭadyumna, 63
Dhṛṣṭaketu, 63
Dhṛtarāṣṭra, 16, 65–6, 279, 282
Dhruva, 4, 27, 33, 46, 205, 210, 304, 306–7, 311
Dhruvanakṣatra, 27, 40
Dhundhu, 49
Dhundhumāra, 50
Dhvani School, 11, 13
Dhvanyāloka, 123–4
Dīkṣitar, 9
Dilīpa, 52, 54
Dīrgha tamas, 57, 67
Diṣṭa, 47–8
Diti, 42, 317
Divya, 67
Doab, 48, 58
Draupadī 17, 63, 66, 121, 272, 282
Drāviḍa, 10–11
Dravyaśakti, 20
Dṛḍhāśva, 50
Droṇa, 280
Dṛṣadvatī, 110
Druhyu, 58–9, 67, 115
Drupada, 63, 66
Duḥśālā, 66
Durgā, 298
Durukti, 277
Durvāsas, 142–4, 223
Duryodhana, 66, 307
Duṣyanta, 36, 59, 272, 274
Dvaita, 235
Dvāpara, 10, 151, 238
Dvāraka, 15–6, 67, 80–2, 84, 120–1, 240, 244, 248, 267, 285, 298, 311
Dvimīḍha, 60–1
Dvita, 198

E

Egypt, 45, 313
Ekata, 198
Ekāntikadharma, 197–8, 202
Elliot, C., 8
Ellora, 220
Emerson, 3
Eran (M. P.), 217–8, 265

F

Farquhar, 4, 8

G

Gadag, 261
Gāḍhi, 56
Gadhwa, 219
Gajendra, 131, 223
Gaṇas (Rudras, Skandas, Naigameyas, Pāśupatas, Vṛṣadvajinas) 100
Gaṇas (Brahmadhānas, Yātudānas, Vārtas, Paulastyas, Nairṛtas, Āgastyas, Kauśikas), 101
Gandhamādana, 37
Gāndhāra, 55
Gāndhārī, 16, 65–6, 282
Gandharva, 51, 55, 272, 274
Gaṅgā (Ganges), 17, 53, 59, 91, 111, 148, 152
Gaṅgādhar, 216
Gaṅgādvāra, 94
Gāndhi, 242, 277
Garbe, 195
Garga, 60–1, 72, 112
Gārgya, 61

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Garuḍa, 89, 135, 184, 189, 225, 263
Gāthāsaptaśati, 123
Gauḍavaho, 123
Gauḍapāda, 13–4
Gaubati, 248–9
Gaurī, 59
Gautama, 12, 62, 268
Gautamī, 110–1
Gayā, 219, 266–7
Gāyatrī, 172–3
Ghate, 42
Ghora Āṅgirasa, 120, 185
Ghosundi, 188, 214
Giridhar, 242
Gītā, 3–4, 13, 19, 74, 84, 120–2, 128–9, 133, 139, 141, 146–7, 151–2, 154–5, 160–2, 164–5, 169, 181–2, 185–6, 190, 192, 194–5, 197–8, 205, 208–9, 245, 280
Gītābhāṣya, 234
Gitagovinda, 8, 126, 238
Godāvarī, 54, 119
Gokarṇam, 119, 266
Gokula, 72, 120–2
Goloka, 238, 262
Gopāla, 35, 191–2, 237, 242
Gopālabhaṭṭa, 11, 239
Gopījanavallabha, 237, 259
Gopīśata keli kāra, 238
Gorresio, 95
Govardhana, 8, 74, 121, 168, 220
Govinda, 35, 156, 192, 212, 252
Govindānanda, 11
Gṛhyasūtras, 300
Grierson, 187
Gujarat, 48, 58, 238, 242
Guṇacandra, 12
Guptas, 214–6, 218–20, 238, 264
Guru, 248
Guruvāyūr, 248
Guruvāyūrappan, 248

H

Haihayas, 57, 59, 112–4, 119
Haimakavana, 100
Hāla, 123, 125
Hallīśaka, 125
Haṁsa, 209
Hara, 266
Hari, 27, 42–3, 83, 85, 124, 131–2, 142–4, 148, 150–1, 155–6, 163, 188, 197, 223, 226, 253, 256, 261, 266, 280, 282, 292, 295, 306
Haridaśva, 110–1
Haridvāra, 29, 94, 148, 267
Harigītā, 198
Harihara, 266
Harilīlā, 7
Hariścandra, 51–2, 102, 104–5, 108–111
Hārita, 52, 286
Harivaṁśa, 5, 52, 109–111, 121–22, 192
Harivarṣa, 37
Harṣa, 220
Hastin, 59–61
Hastināpura, 16–7, 59, 61–2, 66, 79–81, 287, 290, 313
Hayagrīva, 27
Hazra, R. C., 4, 8
Heliodora, 189
Hemacandra, 124–5
Hemakūṭa, 37
Heracles, 188
Hiḍimbā, 274

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Himālaya, 16, 37, 55, 94, 259
Hiṁsā, 277
Hindi, 245
Hindu, 3, 9, 15, 28, 160, 181, 252, 281, 283, 285, 289, 292, 299, 305
Hinduism, 28, 42, 125, 207–8, 214, 301
Hiraṇmaya, 37
Hiraṇyakaśipu, 27, 30, 43, 130, 144–5, 159, 223
Hiraṇyākṣa, 30, 43, 159, 303, 309
Hiriyanna, 178
Hitopadeśa, 83
Huien Tsang, 12, 220
Hlādinī Mahāśakti, 239
Hopkins, 175
Hooper, J. S. M., 221
Hoskote, (Mysore), 268
Hoysala, 260
Hṛṣīkeśa, 212, 252
Hūṇas, 160

I

Iconography, 252
Ikṣvāku, 47, 49, 54–6, 59, 68, 110
Ilā, 47, 55
Ilāvṛta, 37
India, 3, 8, 11, 45, 47, 70, 79, 95–6, 113, 166, 180, 214, 220, 235–36, 248, 265, 267, 287, 313–4
Indra, 32, 35, 42, 49, 50, 57, 74, 75, 91, 94, 96, 100, 104–5, 115, 120, 175, 177, 182, 183, 190, 192, 208, 269, 303–4, 309
Indradyumna, 10
Indraprastha, 80
Indravāha, 49
Indrayajña, 73–5
Irāvata, 269
Irāvatī, 277
Īśvara, 83, 250
Īśvarakṛṣṇa, 14, 22

J

Jaḍabharata, 4, 297, 299
Jadu, 83
Jagannātha, 67
Jahnu, 56
Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, 115
Jainism, 27, 34–5, 180–1, 186, 194–5
Jamadagni, 104, 112–4, 116
Jāmbavān, 298
Jāmbavatī, 215
Jambu, 34, 37–9
Jamunā (Yamunā), 29, 55, 58, 73, 76–7, 166, 188
Janaka, 55, 92
Janamejaya, 86
Janārdana, 187, 218, 252, 263
Janārdhan, Buddha, 248
Janmāṣṭamī, 70
Jarā, 64
Jarāsandha, 64, 67, 79–80, 121, 307
Jātaka, 53
Jaya, 43, 56, 60, 159
Jayadeva, 8, 238
Jayanātha, 217
Jayantī, 35
Jayaswal, K. P., 101–2
Jīva, 29, 31, 33, 132, 134–6, 162, 173, 178, 203–4, 235–6, 287
Jīvagoswāmi, 170, 239
Jīvanmukti, 236
Jñānaśakti, 20

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Jñānayoga, 84, 234
Jñāneśvara, 244–5
Jñāneśvarī, 245
Jñātṛka, 195
Jobares, 188
Jodhpur, 220
Junagadh, 216
Jupiter, 40

K

Kabir, 160, 247
Kailāsanātha, 119
Kaiṭabha, 269–70
Kākutstha, 49
Kāla, 20–1, 24–5, 200–1
Kālakūṭa, 169
Kālayavana, 79–80, 307
Kalleśvara, 259
Kālidāsa, 55, 59, 162, 274
Kālindī, 123
Kaliṅga, 67
Kālīya, 72–3
Kaliyuga, 6, 16–7, 28, 85–6, 147, 151, 277, 293
Kalki, 28, 85, 209
Kalmaṣapāda, 53
Kāmadhenu, 112
Kāmasūtra, 125
Kambhoja, 52
Kāmpilya, 62
Kaṁsa, 67, 69–73, 78–9, 121, 124, 157, 160, 187, 224, 299, 312
Khāṇḍava, 85
Kane, 105
Kaṇāda, 12
Kāñcī, 266
Kaniṣka, 117
Kaṅkas, 160
Kapardin, 96
Kapila, 4, 26–7, 30–1, 207–8, 233, 256
Kapilāśva, 50
Kapiṣṭhala Kāṭha Saṁhitā, 103
Kappe Chennigaraya, 260
Kangra, 118
Kaṇva, 85, 214, 300
Kānyakubja, 59, 113
Karandikar, 113
Kārapathadeśa, 55
Kardama, 27, 282
Kārkoṭaka, 113
Karmarkar, A. P., 112
Karmayoga, 84, 234
Karṇa, 67
Kārtavīryārjuna, 112
Kārūṣa, 47, 56, 66
Kāśī, 78, 113
Kāśirāja, 65
Kāśya, 57
Kāśyapa, 86, 99, 116, 119, 282, 307–8, 317
Kāśya Śandipāṇi, 122
Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā, 103
Kathiawar, 58
Kātyāyana, 107
Kātyāyanī, 75, 166, 168, 298
Kauravas, 63, 65
Kauśāmbī, 66
Kauśika, 110
Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, 92, 120
Kaustubha, 184
Kāverī, 9, 10, 227, 268
Keith, 193,
Kekeya, 55
Kennedy, 193
Kerala, 119, 224, 248
Keralamāhātmya, 118

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Keśava, 147, 187, 212, 252–3, 259–61, 263
Keśavamaṇḍalika, 267
Ketumāla, 37
Khajurāho, 264
Khasas, 160
Khaṭvāṅga, 52, 54
Khoh, 217
Khurai, 217
Kimpuruṣa, 37
Kirātas, 160
Kiṣkindhā, 255
Kosala, 54
Krauñca, 34, 38–9
Kriyā, (Śakti), 20, 199, 203
Krodha, 277
Kroṭṛī, 59
Kṛpa, 62
Kṛpī, 62, 280–1, 295
Kṛṣṇa, 5–6, 15–7, 35, 66–8, 70–82, 84–6, 119–126, 128, 130, 146–7, 151, 155, 157–172, 183–196, 203, 205, 208–9, 215–6, 219–20, 222, 224–5, 237–44, 247–9, 253–4, 259, 263, 268, 271–3, 277–280, 285–6, 289–90, 298, 300–1, 303 306–7, 309, 311, 313–8
Kṛṣṇā, 69, 119
Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa, 120
Kṛṣṇadāsakavirāja, 240
Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, 65
Kṛṣṇa Hārita, 120
Kṛta, 10
Kṛtamāla, 10
Kṛtavīrya, 116
Kṛti, 57
Kṛtyā, 142
Kṣattravṛddha, 57
Kṣemaka, 99
Kṣetrajña, 134
Kubera, 210
Kuhn, 184
Kukura, 67–8
Kulaśekhara, 224, 227
Kumāras, 27, 118
Kumāragupta, 215–6
Kumbhakarṇa, 43, 159
Kundian, 118
Kuntī, 16–7, 66, 68, 277, 280, 286–7, 289
Kuntibhoja, 66, 68
Kuntunātha, 35
Kuravai, 125
Kūrmāvatāra, 209
Kuru, 37, 63, 64–5
Kurujāṅgala, 63
Kurukṣetra, 63, 240, 268
Kuśa, 34, 38–9, 55, 66
Kuṣāna, 214
Kūṭastha Puruṣa, 200–1
Kuvalayāpīḍa, 78
Kuvalayāśva, 49–50

L

Lakṣmaṇa, 54–4
Lakṣmī, 200, 204, 215, 217, 254, 267, 269, 275, 282
Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, 263–4, 267
Laṅkā, 225
Lava, 55
Law (Dr.), 50
Liṅga (phallus) 96
Lobha, 277
Loka, 38–9
Lokāloka, 38–9
Lokapadma, 22

M

Macdonell, 181, 183

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Madanamohana, 263
Madanapāla, 11
Mādhava, 212, 252-3
Mādhava Lavaṇa, 55
Madhu, 55, 269-70
Madhucchandas, 105
Madhupurī (Madhurā, Mathurā), 55
Madhurakavi, 221-2
Mādhurya bhakti, 155
Madhusūdana, 210, 212, 252
Madhusūdana Saraswatī, 149, 156
Madhva, Madhvācārya, Madhvas, 8, 11, 124, 214, 231, 235-6, 239, 255, 301
Madhyadeśa, 58
Madras, 258
Mādrī, 66, 279
Magadha, 65-7, 79-80, 84-5, 113, 219
Mahābhārata, 4, 6, 9, 12, 29, 52, 66-7, 81-2, 86, 93-4, 97-8, 109-10, 116-7, 120-2, 128, 133, 139, 185, 190-3, 195, 197-8, 203, 205, 238, 272-3, 282, 291-2, 304, 306
Mahābalipuram, 124, 258, 264, 268
Mahābhāṣya, 186-8, 192
Mahābhoja, 67
Mahādeva, 93-4
Mahākaruṇa, 44
Mahānandi, 84
Mahāpuruṣa, 18-9
Mahārāṣṭra (Marāṭhā, Marāṭhi), 244-5, 248
Mahātala, 41
Mahāvīra, 35, 195
Mahendra (Mount), 116, 119
Maheśvara, 90-1, 94, 96
Māhiṣmatī, 113
Maitreya, 16, 21-2, 29
Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā, 114
Majholi, 266
Majumdar, A. K., 124
Malayadhvaja, 10
Malli, 35
Mālyavat, 37
Mamatā, 284
Mānasottara, 38, 40
Maṇavālamāmuni, 260
Mandara Mount, 27
Māndhātā, 52, 59, 209, 253, 265
Mandor (Jodhpur), 220
Mangalore, 118
Mantra, 191
Manu (Manus), 27-8, 32-3, 36, 45-6, 49, 131, 200-1, 281-2, 291, 304, 306
Manusmṛti, 107, 288, 292, 306, 318
Manvantara, 32-3, 45, 90
Manyu, 60
Marīci, 33
Mārīṣa, 68
Mārkaṇḍeya, 87, 225, 255-8
Mars (Aṅgāraka), 40
Marudeva (Marudevī, Merudevī), 34
Marut, 42, 60
Maryādā bhakti, 237
Māṭhara Vṛtti, 14
Mathurā, 17, 35, 55, 67, 69, 71, 78-80, 188, 236, 238, 266
Matināra, 59
Mātrī, 91
Mātṛkundian, 118
Mātṛviṣṇu, 217-8

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Matsyāvatāra, 27, 45, 209
Maurya, 85, 214
Māyā, 20, 25, 29, 33, 43, 78, 83, 138, 177, 200, 205, 277
Māyavan, 125
Mayūrākṣa, 217
Megasthenes, 101, 181, 188
Meghadūta, 162
Mehrauli, 218
Melkote, 261
Menakā, 59
Mepattur, 248
Meru (Mount), 38, 40, 101, 197
Meṣa (Aries), 39
Methora, 188
Mewar, 243
Mīrā Bai, 242–3, 250
Mithi, 55
Mithilā (Tirhut), 55
Mitra, 91, 183, 208
Mitrasaha, 53
Mitravinda, 273, 278
Moghals, 79
Mohinī, 291
Mokṣa (Mukti), 30–1, 132, 213, 235
Mokṣadharma (MBH), 12–3
Monistic Sāṅkhya, 26
Mṛgu (Mārgaveya), 115, 117
Mṛṣā, 277
Mṛtyu, 277
Mucukunda, 51, 80
Mudgala, 62
Muir, 92
Muktāphala, 7
Mukunda, 315
Mūlaprakṛti (Avyakta), 201
Munisuvrata, 35
Mūrti, 27
Muṣṭika, 78
Mysore, 118, 253, 258, 260, 263

N

Nabhaga, 48
Nābhāga, 48
Nābhāgodiṣṭa, 47–8
Nābhi, 27, 34
Nāga, 51, 112–3, 275–6
Nagalapuram (Tamil Nadu), 266
Nagnajit, 279
Nahuṣa, 57
Naimiṣāraṇya, 14
Nairṛta Rākṣasas, 99
Nakula, 76
Nala, 53
Nālāyiraprabandham, 220, 222, 229
Nāmasaṅkīrtana, 7, 42, 146, 239
Nāmdev, 244–5
Nammālvār, 221–4, 228
Nānāghat, 189, 214
Nanda, 69–71, 78, 85, 155, 256, 300
Nappinnai, 125
Nara, 27, 60, 181, 190–1
Nārada, 6, 15–6, 20, 28–9, 78, 80, 94, 102, 104, 110, 157–8, 160, 179, 197, 213, 256, 297, 304, 318
Nāradabhaktisūtras, 156
Nāradī, 304
Nāradapañcarātra Saṁhitā, 123, 196
Narahari, H. G., 106
Naraka (28 in number), 41–2, 249, 315
Nārāyaṇa, 9, 10, 27, 89, 133, 147–48, 181, 184, 189–91, 195–6, 209, 212–3, 228–9, 235, 246, 252–3, 261, 267

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Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭatiri, 248
Nārāyaṇaśilā, 267
Nārāyaṇīya, 9, 133, 135, 182, 193, 197–8, 203, 205, 209, 213
Nārāyaṇīyam, 248
Nariṣyanta, 47–8
Narmadā, 51, 114
Nārsi Mehta, 242
Nāthamuni, 220
Nāṭyaśāstra, 77, 171
Nemi (Neminātha), 35
Nikṛti, 277
Nīla, 37, 62, 227
Nimbārka, 126, 214, 236–7
Nimi, 49, 55, 92
Niraya, 277
Nirṛti, 277
Nirukta, 36, 106, 183
Nirvāṇa, 181
Niṣadha, 37
Niyati, 200
Nṛsiṁhāvatāra, 27, 129, 144, 209, 220, 223, 253, 260
Nṛvarāhamūrti, 264
Nyāya, 12

O

Oldenberg, 184
Om, 18, 44, 146–7
Opani, 217
Orissa, 125, 241

P

Padmanābha, 210, 212, 252
Padmapīṭha, 259
Padmaprabhā, 35
Padma Tantra, 136, 196
Pai, D. A., 9
paithan (Pratiṣṭhāna) 54, 56, 58
Pakhtas, 100, 115
Pāla, 238
Pāli, 180
Panari, 219
Pāñcāla, 62, 66
Pāñcarātra (Bhāgavata cult, dharma, faith, system), 133, 135–6, 138, 160, 182, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195–8, 201, 203–4, 206, 212, 214, 222–3, 226, 231, 235, 250, 294
Pāñcarātra Saṁhitā, 133, 135, 231, 250
Pāñcarātra Sattra, 191, 196
Pañcatantra, 83
Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa, 114
Pandarināṭha, 267
Pandarpur, 244, 267
Pāṇḍava, 29, 66, 79, 80, 86, 120–21, 160, 268, 272
Pāṇḍu, 65–6, 68, 279
Pāṇḍuraṅga, 268
Pāṇḍya, 10–1
Pāṇini, 9, 186–7
Panthia, 253
Para, 203–4
Paramahaṁsa, 34
Paramārtha, 14
Parama Saṁhitā, 196, 198
Paramātman, 152–3, 177, 237
Parāśara, 65
Paraśurāma, 28, 54, 56–7, 112–9, 209, 210
Paravāsudeva, 203
Pargiter, 4, 8, 47, 50, 58, 63
Parīkṣit, 4, 15–8, 20, 42, 64, 66, 85–6, 141, 145, 155, 169, 251, 254, 277, 293, 306–7, 311

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Pārśvanātha, 35
Parvata, 110
Pārvatī, 269
Pātāla, 19, 41
Patañjali, 9, 12, 186–8, 192–3
Pathari, 220
Patil, D. R., 99
Paudenya, 53
Pauravas, 58–9, 63, 65, 113
Payasvinī, 10
Periyālvār, 225–6
Periya Tirumadal, 229
Periya Tirumoli, 225, 229
Periya Tiruvandādi, 221
Persia, 21
Perumāl Tirumoli, 225
Phanes, 21
Phoenicia, 21
Piṅgala, 290
Piṇṇai, 125
Piśāca, 99
Piṣṭapuri, 217
Pitṛyāna, 44
Plakṣa, 34, 38–9
Potana (Potali), 53
Prabhāsa, 78–9, 84, 124, 266
Pracetas, 83, 272
Pradyumna, 81, 134, 198, 200, 202–3, 211–2, 252, 317
Prāgjyotiṣa, 249
Prahlāda, 4, 43–4, 130, 141, 144–45, 149, 155, 205, 223, 225, 230, 301
Prajāpati, 28, 91–2, 105, 273
Prakaṭāditya, 219
Prakṛti, 23–5, 31, 43, 89, 126, 135, 167, 200, 234, 287
Prāmloca, 272
Praṇava, 146
Prasūti, 33
Pratiloma, 274
Pratīpa, 65
Pratyagraha, 66
Prayāga, 63, 266
Priyavrata, 33–4, 45–6, 267
Pṛṣadaśva, 48
Pṛthā, 66, 68
Pṛthu, 4, 27, 295–6, 408, 313–5
Pulindas, 160
Pulkasas, 160
Pundalika, 244, 267
Puṇḍraka, 67
Punjab, 118, 166, 214–5
Puramjaya, 40
Purāṇa, 3–4, 6–8, 11–2, 36, 39, 47, 52, 56–8, 66, 85–6, 90–1, 96, 99, 109, 120–2, 184, 192, 194, 204, 209, 305
Purāṇa :—
Agni, 209
Bhaviṣya, 118
Brahma, 52, 90, 110–1
Brahmavaivarta, 123
Bṛhannāradīya, 11
Kālikā, 11
Kūrma, 91, 94
Liṅga, 91
Matsya, 36, 56
Nārada, 304
Padma, 3, 7, 56, 90, 95
Skanda, 97
Vāmana, 56, 100
Vārāha, 209
Vāyu, 36, 56, 90, 94, 99, 100–1, 110–1, 192, 209
Viṣṇu, 4–5, 8, 12, 56, 122–3, 133, 138–9, 192, 194, 203, 205–6

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Purañjana, 33, 162, 167, 291
Puru, 56, 58–9
Purukutsa, 51
Purumīḍha, 60–1
Purūravas, 55–7, 274
Puruṣa, 19, 20–4, 26, 31, 89, 167–8, 177, 181, 190, 196, 200–2
Puruṣa sūkta, 19, 181, 190–1
Puruṣottama, 237–8, 252, 261
Pusalkar, A. D., 54, 73, 113
Pūṣan, 91
Puṣkara, 34, 38, 40, 55, 108
Puṣkarāvatī, 55
Puṣyamitra, 85, 214
Pūtanā, 71–2, 121

R

Rādhā (Rādhikā), 5, 8, 122–6, 237, 239–40, 244, 247
Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, 125–6, 237–8, 240
Rādhākrishanan, S., 120, 179
Rāgānuga bhakti, 240
Raghu, 54
Raghunandana, 11
Raghunāthadāsa, 239
Rāhu, 41
Rainka-Jio, 118
Rājādhidevī, 274
Rājasiṁha, 10
Rājasthān (Rājputana), 49, 50, 188, 214–5, 238, 269
Rājasūya, 80–1
Rāji, 57
Rajim (Raipur), 264
Rākṣasa, 58, 80, 82, 99, 272–3, 304
Rāma, 28, 54–5, 78, 93, 98, 101, 115–7, 119, 187, 209–10, 224–5, 247–8
Rāma Bhārgava, 209
Rāma Dāśarathi, 209
Rāma Dhanurdhara, 209
Rāma Jāmadagnya, 209
Rāmacaritamānasa, 247
Rāmakrishna Paramahaṁsa, 164
Rāmānanda, 247
Ramaṇaka, 73
Rāmānuja 12, 160, 196, 214, 220-21, 231–2, 234, 236–7, 239, 247, 251, 260, 266, 301
Rāmāyaṇa, 52, 92–3, 95, 107–10, 112, 224, 282
Rambhā, 57
Ramyaka, 37
Raṅganātha, 227–8, 253, 268
Rantideva, 60–1, 293
Rao Gopināth, T. A., 221, 252
Rāsa (Rāsalīlā), 75–8, 122, 125, 161–5, 167–71, 262, 276
Rāsapañcādhyāyī, 124–5, 168
Rasātala, 19, 41
Rāṣṭra, 57
Ratītara, 48
Rāvaṇa, 28, 43, 98–9, 101, 113, 159
Raya, 56
Ṛcīka, 56, 108–9, 113, 116
Reṇukā, 113
Revata, 48
Rewah, 47, 56, 58
Ṛgveda, 19, 28, 55, 65, 92, 96, 100, 103, 105–7, 115, 120, 122, 132, 138, 146, 174–6, 180, 182–3, 190, 192, 195, 314
Ṛkṣa, 62, 64
Ṛkṣavān, 113
Rohidas, 247

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Rohiṇī, 69
Rohita, 51–2, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110–1
Ṛṣabha, 27, 34–6, 64
Ṛtuparṇa, 52
Ruci, 27, 275
Rudra, 91–7, 99, 169, 181
Rukmabai, 267
Rukmi, 273, 278, 315
Rukmiṇī, 80, 244, 271–3, 278, 280, 289, 298, 302, 306, 309
Rūpagoswāmi, 170, 239
Rūpamaṇḍana, 252, 259–60

S

Ṣaḍguruśiṣya, 107
Sadyovadhvaḥ, 286
Sagara, 52–3, 59
Sahadeva, 66, 80–1
Sahasrajit, 59
Sahasraśīrṣa, 191
Śaiva, 118–9, 181, 188, 214, 220, 266, 298
Śaka, 34, 38–9, 52, 214
Śakari river, 218
Śākapūṇi, 183
Śākya, 194
Śakti, 89, 164, 199, 200, 203–4, 210, 236, 240, 292, 296–8
Śaktimat, 240
Śakuni, 121
Śaktyātman, 210
Śakuntala, 5, 59, 272, 274, 300
Śālmali, 34, 38–9
Śālwa, 81–2, 303
Śalya, 66
Sāmaveda, 146
Śamhara, 317
Saṁbhava, 35
Śaṁbhu, 48
Saṁhitās, 174
Samīka, 17
Saṁkṣobha, 217
Saṁvaraṇa, 63
Saṁyāti, 57
Sanaka brothers, 43, 156, 255–7, 259
Sanātana, 239
Śāṇḍilya, 174
Śaṇḍipāṇi, 78
Sañjaya, 16
Śaṅkara, 4, 8, 12–3, 26, 99, 138, 231, 259
Saṅkarṣaṇa, 41, 134, 188–9, 198, 200, 202–3, 210–2, 252
Saṅkarṣaṇa-Vāsudeva cult, 9
Sāṅkhya, 4, 22–5, 20, 84, 133, 195–7, 200–1, 207–8
Sāṅkhya Kārikā, 14, 22
Sāṅkhyāyana Śrautasūtra, 106, 111
Śāntanu, 64–5
Saptarṣi, 40, 269
Śāntinātha, 35
Śāntiparva (MBH), 13, 93, 116
Sarasvatī, 59, 257
Śarmiṣṭhā, 57–8
Sarnath, 219
Śārṅga, 216
Śārṅgin, 215
Sarvakarṇa, 113
Sarvanātha, 217
Sarvānukramaṇi, 107
Śaryāta, 48
Śaryāti, 47–8
Śaśabindu, 59
Śaśada, 49
Śatadhanu, 289

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Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 27, 92, 115, 181, 184, 193, 196
Śatarūpā, 45
Satī, 88, 90, 98-9, 285-6, 288-9
Satrajit, 67, 289
Śatrughna, 54-5
Saturn, 40
Sātvata, 9, 55, 185, 188, 193-5
Sātvata Saṃhitā, 210
Sātvata vidhi, 193
Satya (Nagnajiti), 278
Satyabhāmā, 67, 289, 313
Sātyaki, 194
Satyavatī, 56, 65, 113
Satyavrata, 51
Satyāyu, 56
Satyayuga, 151
Saubha, 82
Saudāsa, 280, 318
Śaunaka, 57, 107
Sauptikaparvan (MBH), 97
Saurasenas, 188
Saurasenoi, 188
Sāvarṇi, 46
Savitṛ, 104-5
Sāyaṇa, 107
Schraoder, 125, 136, 191, 196, 198, 201, 205
Śeṣa, 22, 266, 268, 270
Śeṣaśāyī, 268
Sharma, D. S., 9
Siddhārtha, 194
Śikhaṇḍin, 304
Śikṣāṣṭaka, 241
Śilappadikāram, 9, 125, 266-7
Śilparatna, 255, 264
Simhikā, 101
Sindhu, 55
Sinha, Purnendu 20
Śīradhvaja, 55
Sirmur, 118
Siriya Tirumadal, 229
Śiśupāla, 7, 43, 68, 81, 121, 157-60, 318
Sītā, 225-6, 247, 282
Śitala, 35
Śiva, 28, 33, 82, 88-90, 93-102, 119, 143, 180-2, 188, 204, 210, 220, 255-8, 269, 289, 292, 298-9
Śivabhāgavata, 187-8
Śivas, 100
Śivayajña, 89
Skanda, 97
Skandagupta, 215
Smārtas, 222
Smith, Vincent, 220
Smṛtis, 128, 286
Soma, 100, 105
Somanāyakī, 260
Somatrātā, 215
Somnathpur, 260
Son river, 47
Śrāvasti, 55
Śreyāṃsa, 35
Śrī, 125-6, 137, 140, 204, 223, 282
Śrībhāṣya, 232-3
Śrīdāma, 82
Śrīdevī, 261, 263
Śridhara, 212, 225, 252
Śrīdhara Swāmin, 8
Śrīkāntā, 34
Śriraṅgam, 224-8, 253 266, 268
Śrīvatsa, 260
Śṛṅgavān, 37
Śrutadeva, 68

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Śrutaśrava 68
Śrutāyu, 56
Subāhu, 55
Subhadra, 66, 82, 272, 277
Subrahmaṇya, 269
Sudarśana, 143
Sudarśana Sūri, 12
Sudevī, 27
Sudāsa 53, 62, 100
Sudāsa Ārya, 100
Sudāsa Paijavana, 100
Sudhanvan, 65
Sudyumna, 47
Subma, 67
Śuka, 4, 13, 17–20, 42–3, 65, 85, 169, 205, 283
Śukra, 57
Śukleśvar, 248
Śuktimatī, 58
Śūlapāṇi, 11
Sumaṅgala, 34
Sumati Swāmin, 34
Sumer, 45
Sumeru, 37
Sumukha, 225
Śunaḥśepa, 52, 102–11, 296
Sunanda, 34, 256
Śunaḥpuccha, 104
Sundara, 255
Śuṅga 85, 214
Śūnolāṅgūla, 104
Suparṇa, 184
Supārśva, 35
Supreme (Being, Brahman, god, Truth) 9, 15, 17–8, 29, 32, 36, 71, 88–9, 120, 122, 133–34, 136–9, 146–7, 150, 153–4, 157–9, 162, 165–7, 173, 176–78, 180–2, 185, 191, 193–5, 198, 203–7, 209, 211–2, 231–32, 235, 240, 247, 251, 282
Śūra, 68
Śūrasena, 69
Sūrdās, 241–2
Sūrpāraka, 116, 119
Sūrsāgar, 242
Sūrya, 133, 162, 220, 255–7
Sūryavaṁśa, 54
Suśruta, 72
Susunia Rock Inscription, 238
Sutala, 19, 41
Sūta, 86
Sūtradhāra, 238
Suvarloka, 19
Suvidhi, 34
Suyajña, 280
Suyamadevas, 27
Svabhāva, 20–1, 25
Svābhāvikabhedābhedavāda, 236
Svayaṁvara, 272, 278
Sveta, 37
Svetadvīpa, 197
Syamantaka, 67

T

Tagore Rabindranath, 162
Taitt. Āraṇyaka, 115, 191
Taitt. Saṁhitā, 103, 114
Takṣa, 55
Takṣaka, 17, 85–6, 145, 308
Takṣaśilā, 55, 189
Talātala, 19, 41
Talkad, 261
Tamasā, 217
Tamil, 9, 125, 220, 231, 266–7
Tamil land, 248
Tāmraparṇī, 9, 10

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Tantra (tāntric), 123, 126, 196, 239, 296
Tantrasāra, 255
Tāpatī, 64
Tattvatraya, 210
Telugu, 67
Tengalai, 230–1, 234
Tīrthaṅkara (24 in number), 35
Tirukuruntandaham, 229
Tirumālai, 225, 227, 230
Tirumaṅgal, 221, 225, 227–9
Tirumoli, 225
Tiruneduntandaham, 229
Tirupati, 266
Tiruppallāṇḍu, 225, 228
Tiruppān, 221
Tiruppalliyeluchi, 227
Tiruppavai, 226, 228, 230
Tiruvāsiriyam, 221
Tiruvāymoli, 221–2
Tiruverukutrirukkai, 229
Tiruviruttam, 221
Tondaradippodi, 227, 230
Tonnur, 261
Toramana, 217
Treta, 10, 151
Trichur, 119
Trikūṭācala, 263
Triṇavarta, 72
Trita, 198
Tritsus, 100
Trivandrum 268
Trivikrama 212, 252
Triśaṅku 51, 102
Tryambaka 99
Tukārām, 166, 244–6, 250
Tula (Libra), 39
Tulasīdāsa, 247, 250
Turvasu, 48, 67
Turyayāna, 115
Tuśāna, 215
Tusitadevas, 33

U

Udaipur, 118
Udayagiri, 215
Uddhava, 29, 84, 145, 155, 205, 213, 284
Ugrasena, 67, 69, 78
Umā, 91, 93, 99
Upaniṣad, 73, 122,1 46–7, 154, 176–86, 194, 198, 206, 208, 234, 254, 318
Upaniṣad :—
Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, 115, 132, 154, 165, 176, 178–9
Chāndogyopaniṣad, 120, 122, 146, 173, 178, 251
Īśāvāsyopaniṣad, 251
Kaṭhopaniṣad, 138, 167, 179, 184, 213
Kauṣītaki, 132
Kenopaṣad, 178
Mahānārāyaṇa, 191
Maitrī, 184
Muṇḍaka, 176, 179, 180, 251
Śvetāśvatara, 170, 180, 233, 254
Taittirīya, 169, 170, 178
Upapurāṇa, 11
Uparicaravasu, 64–6, 205
Upendra, 253
Ūrdhvaretas, 99
Urvaśī 56–6, 274
Uśana (Venus), 40
Uśas, 92, 105
Uśīnara, 280
Utaṅka, 49

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Utathya, 284
Uttānapāda, 33, 45, 275
Uttarā, 272
Uttaragītā, 13
Uttararāmacarita, 53

V

Vāc, 174
Vadagalai, 230–1, 234
Vāhikas, 48, 66
Vahni, 91
Vaidya, C. V., 8
Vaikhānasāgama, 255, 264
Vaikuṇṭha, 84, 135, 139, 140, 142–3, 148–9, 159, 200, 260, 282
Vaiśālī, 48, 113
Vaiśampāyana, 101
Vaiśeṣika, 12, 30
Vaiṣṇava, 5, 10, 41, 118–9, 169, 181–2, 184, 189, 195, 214, 220, 222, 225, 227–9, 231, 235, 239–41, 245, 247, 265–7, 296
Vaiṣṇavism, 155, 184, 187, 191–2, 214, 220, 230–2, 235, 238–9, 244, 248
Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, 111, 114
Vajra, 17
Vākpati, 123
Vālmīki, 117, 225
Vallabha, 214, 237, 240–1, 244, 301
Vāmanāvatāra, 28, 45, 182, 209, 212, 220, 252
Vanaparva (MBH), 52, 82, 116, 282
Vaṅga, 67
Varāhāvatāra, 26–7, 209, 217, 220, 263–6
Varāhamihira, 253
Varāhasāgara, 265
Vārāṇasī, 99
Varṇa, 84
Vārtika, 187
Varuṇa, 46, 102–6, 108, 110–1, 119, 174, 177, 183, 207–8
Vāruṇī, 114
Vasiṣṭha, 55, 304–5
Vāsiṣṭhadharmaśāstra, 107
Vasudeva, 9, 22, 68–70, 78, 81, 120, 155, 185, 271, 277, 280, 298, 303
Vāsudeva, 82, 88, 120, 122, 134, 142–5, 149, 165, 182, 184, 186–95, 197–8, 200, 203, 210, 212, 214, 216, 219, 251–52, 282, 287
Vasupūjya, 35
Vasu upariсara, 93, 197–8
Vatsa, 113
Vatsāsura, 72
Vātsyāyana, 125, 274, 281
Vāyu, 183, 248
Vedānta, 4, 133, 196, 233
Vedāntadeśika, 260
Vedānta sūtras, 195
Vedas (Vedic), 3, 27–8, 86, 88, 92, 95–6, 114, 117, 119, 148, 154, 174–7, 181, 184, 195, 197, 208, 229, 273, 287–8, 295–6, 303, 310
Vedavid, 209
Veṇu, 4, 159, 283, 313
Veṅkaṭanātha, 133
Veṅkaṭa Hill, 266
Veṅkaṭeśa, 265–7
Veṇisaṁhāra, 124

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Veṇugopāla, 258, 262–3
Vetravatī, (Betwa), 58
Vibhavas, (39 in number), 210
Vibhūtī, 84
Vicitravīrya, 65
Vidarbha, 10, 80
Vidanvant, 112
Videha, 49, 55, 113
Vidura, 16–7, 28, 65, 300, 302, 307
Vijaya, 43, 56, 159
Vijayanārāyaṇa, 260
Vikramorvaśīya, 55
Vikukṣi, 48
Vimalaswamin, 35
Vinayapatrikā, 247
Vinayapaṭaka, 304–5
Vipracitti, 101
Vīrabhadra, 88, 91, 93
Vīranārāyaṇa, 227, 258, 280
Vīrasthānakamūrti, 255–6
Virāṭpuruṣa, 18–9, 21
Virūpa, 48
Viṣanins, 100
Viśiṣṭādvaita, 231–2, 234
Viṣṇu, 4, 20, 22, 28, 33–5, 43–4, 46, 48, 54, 57, 59, 70, 82–3, 88–91, 95, 102, 111–2, 117, 119, 125–6, 130, 138–140, 142–4, 148, 151, 153, 159, 181–192, 195–200, 202–4, 207–10, 212,2 15–221, 224–25, 227, 230, 235, 238–9, 244, 247–8, 251–7, 259–62, 264, 266–9, 275, 291–2, 298
Viṣṇupāda, 267
Viṣṇusmṛti, 276
Viṣṇusūkta, 38
Viṣṇutilaka, 136
Viṣṇuvardhana, 260–1
Viśravasa, 99
Viṣvakṣeṇa, 135
Viṣvakṣeṇa Saṁhitā, 210, 212
Viśvāmitra, 51, 59, 117, 102–3, 105, 107–11, 117, 292
Viśvakāya, 120
Viśvantara, 117
Viśvarūpa, 19
Viśvavarman, 216
Viśvadevas, 105
Vitala 19, 41
Viṭhala, 244–6, 266–8
Vivekānanda, 164
Viyati, 57
Vopadeva, 7, 8
Vraja, 69–71, 75, 78, 155, 160, 167, 224, 238, 241, 298
Vṛka, 82
Vṛndāvana, 72, 78, 238, 240, 263
Vṛndāvana goswāmin, 239
Vṛṣabha, 121
Vṛṣaparvan, 57
Vṛṣasena 67
Vṛṣṇi, 67, 79, 130, 160, 194
Vṛtra, 42, 57, 157, 309–10
Vyāsa, 4, 6, 7, 15, 17, 28, 65, 86, 209–10
Vyūha, 187, 191, 198, 200, 202–3, 210–12, 231
Vyūha-Vāsudeva, 203

W

Weber, 193
Whitney, 96
Williams Monier, 220
Wilson, 7, 95–6
Winternitz, 9, 121

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Y

Yādava, 5, 16, 29, 55, 58–9, 67, 72, 80, 120, 194, 280, 318
Yadu, 35, 58–9, 66–7, 69, 84, 194, 287
Yajña, 27, 33, 275–6, 280, 303, 310
Yajñapuruṣa, 283
Yājñavalkya, 179
Yakṣa, 183, 304
Yama, 91, 148, 225
Yamaloka, 32
Yāska, 36, 106
Yaśodā, 155, 172, 225, 300
Yatana, 277
Yati, 57
Yavana, 52, 79
Yavana Haridāsa, 150
Yavīnara, 62
Yayāti, 57–9, 274
Yoga, 12, 27, 30, 44, 77, 100, 133, 196
Yogamāyā, 69, 162, 297
Yogamūrti (Yogeśamūrti), 258–9
Yoganarasiṁha, 258
Yogāsanamūrti, 255–9
Yogaśayanamūrti, 255
Yogasthānakamūrti, 255, 258
Yogasūtras, 185
Yudhiṣṭhira, 15–7, 66, 80, 157–8, 279, 295, 302, 307–8, 318
Yuvanāśva, 50, 59, 160

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

SUBJECT INDEX

A

Ālvārs :—
date of, 220–1
Animals as preceptors in the Bhā. P. and other works 83–4
Avatāra :—
in Hinduism, 207–8
in Vedic Literature, 208
in the Gītā, 208–9
in the Purāṇas, 209
in the Bhāgavata cult, 210–12
in the Bhā. P., 26f.

B

Bhaga in Veda, 195
Bhāgavata Purāṇa :—
general description, 3–4
and Viṣ. P., 4
and MBH., 4–6
and Devī. Bhā., 11
and Kālikā P., 11
and its peculiar features, 6, 7
and nāmopāsana, 8, 146
and creation, 20, 220
and avatāras, 26 f.
and Kapila's teachings, 30–2
and five kinds of mukti, 32, 132
and Sāyujya or ekatva, 133
and ancient geography, 37–9
and narakas, 41–2
and caste, 44, 47–8, 83, 150, 160–1, 230, 292–3
and the traditional history of India, 47–68, 84–5
and Rāsalīlā, 75–9
and nāmasaṅkīrtana, 149–51
and Sarga, Visarga, Sthāna, 127–9
and poṣaṇa, ūtīs, manvantara, 130–1
and īśānukathā, nirodha, mukti, 131 f.
and Nālāyiraprabandham, 222–30
and the gāyatrīmantra, 172–3

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

and image worship, 250, 254–5
and pilgrim centres, 266–8
and various bhaktas, 241 f.
and the reconciliation of the 3 yogas, 153
and the author's fondness for allegories, 161–2
as a gospel of bhakti, 5
as the source of many Vaiṣṇava sects and songs, 5–6
as the work of a South Indian Tamil bhakta, 9–13, 125, 278
as the bhāṣya of the Gītā, 74, 141, 147, 164–5
as a daśalakṣaṇa Purāṇa, 127 f.
creation accounts compared with Sāṅkhyan creation theory, 22–6
its date and authorship, 7–14
contents of the first skandha, 15–8
contents of the second skandha, 18–29
contents of the third skandha, 29–32
contents of the fourth skandha, 32–3
contents of the fifth skandha, 33–42
contents of the sixth skandha, 42
contents of the seventh skandha, 42–4
contents of the eighth skandha, 45–6
contents of the ninth skandha, 47–8
contents of the tenth skandha, 68–82
contents of the eleventh skandha, 82–4
contents of the twelfth skandha, 84–7

Bhāgavata cult (Pāñcarātra cult) :—
and different Vaiṣṇava movements, 231 f.
and caste, 221
and the Vyūha doctrine, 200, 202–3, 210–3
and creation, 198–203
and avatāra, 209
description of deity in, 204 f.
four stages in the growth of, 195–6
mokṣa (ekatva, sāyujya) according to, 133–5
whether advaitic or non-advaitic, 134–8

Bhakta :—
different types in Bhā. P. and Gītā compared, 151–2
prerequisites of, 232–4

Bhakti :—
a study of the conception of, 174 f.
in the Ṛgveda, 174–6
in the Brāhmaṇas, 176

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

in the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, 176
in the Bhā. P., 151 f.
nine fold, 153–5
development in Vedic period, 177–180
development in post-vedic period, 180 f.
and Viśiṣṭādvaita, 232–4
and Dvaita, 235
and Svābhāvikabhedābhedavāda, 236–7
and Śuddhādvaita, 237–8
and Caitanya, 238–41
Bharata and Bhāratavarṣa, 36

C

Characteristics of a Bhāgavata, 83
Creation from an egg., 21

D

Dakṣa yajña, 88 f.
Dakṣa yajña :—
in Bhā. P., 88–90
in Vāyu P., 90–1
in Vedic literature, 92
in Rāmā., 92–3
in MBH., 93–4
Death of a yogī, 19–20
Dual incarnation theory, 240

I

Image :—
of thumb sized Brahman in Bhā. P., 254
of Vīrasthānakamūrti in Bhā. P., 255–6
of Yogāsanamūrti in Bhā. P., 256–8
of Keśava in Bhā. P., 259–60
of Veṇugopāla in Bhā. P., 262
of Varāhāvatāra in Bhā. P., 263–4
eight armed in Bhā. P., 261–2
Incest in Bhā. P., 276–7
Interpretation of :—
the Śyāma colour of Kṛṣṇa, 71
the Pūtanā legend, 72
the Kālīya legend, 73
the Indrayajña, 74–5
the death of Parīkṣit, 85–6
the word Pāñcarātra, 196

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

the Rāsalīlā, 161–8
the Vastraharaṇa, 166
the Śunaḥśepa legend, 106, 111–2
the Dakṣa yajña, 95–102
the Paraśurāma legend, 113–4, 119

J

Jñāneśvar, 244–5

K

Kṛṣṇa :—
his teachings, 185–6
the name in different texts, 119–20
identity of different Kṛṣṇas, 120–2
and Pāṇḍavas in Bhā. P., 80
Kabir, 247

L

Life of Kṛṣṇa in the Bhā. P., 69–84
Lunar Race, 55–68

M

Mira Bai, 243–4
Mukti :—
five kinds in Bhā. P., 32, 132
and the kingdom of God, 138–40
and knowledge as a means to, 152
and those who hate God 157–60

N

Nālāyiraprabandham 220
Nāmdev, 245
Nāmopāsana—origin and development of, 146–9
Nārāyaṇīyam, 248
Nārsi Mehta, 242–3
Nemināṭha and Kṛṣṇa, 35

P

Paraśurāma legend, 112 f.
Paraśurāma :—
in Vedic literature, 114–5
in the MBH., 116
in the Buddhacarita, 117
in the Rāmā., 117
in different parts of India, 117–9
Parīkṣit :—
his dialogue with Kali, 17
his death, 17, 85

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

his questions and Śuka's answers, 17 f.
Prahlāda's prayers and the Mahākaruṇa of the Bodhisattvas, 44
Purañjana allegory, 33

R

Rādhā :—
question of, 122–3
in Nāradapañcarātra Saṃhitā, 123
in Gāthāsaptaśatī, 123
in Gauḍavaho, 123
in Dhvanyāloka, 123
in Veṇīsaṁhāra, 124
in Prākrit Grammar of Hemacandra, 124
deification of, 124–5
Rāmānanda, 247
Rāsa :—
defined in Nāṭyaśāstra, 77
as collection of five Vaiṣṇava rasas, 169–72
doubts relating to, 168–9

S

Śaraṇāgati in the Bhā. P., 140–5
Sātvatas and Sātvata vidhi, 193–5
Śiva a non Aryan God, 97
Society as depicted in Bhā. P. :—
polygamy in, 271
pilyandry in, 271–2
brides in, 272
rākṣasa marriage in, 272–3
brāhma marriage in, 273
gāndharva marriage in, 274
incest in, 274–7
cousin marriage in, 277–8
Svayamvara in 278–9
Suttee in, 279–81
position of women in, 281f.
duties of women in, 281–2
importance of children in, 283
infidelity amongst couples in, 283–5
a woman's life in general in, 285–6
brahmavādinīs and Sadyovadhvaḥ in, 286–90
low women in, 290–1

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

woman as a temptress in, 291–2
varṇāśrama dharma in, 292 f.
impostors in, 294
ahiṁsā in, 295
Sacrifices in, 295–6
human sacrifice and Śakti worship in, 296–8
Śiva worship in, 298–9
different Saṃskāras in, 299–301
Karma and fate in, 301–2
some superstitions in, 302–3
magic and spells in, 303–4
sex change in, 304–5
king and his duties in, 305 f.
traitors in, 307
bribery and corruption in, 307–8
code of war in, 308–10
different occupations in, 312–4
preservation of dead bodies in, 313
dress and decoration in, 314 f.
food and drink in, 316 f.
meat and fish eating in, 317
cannibals in, 318
drinking in, 318
Solar Race, 47–55
Śuka explains the apparent partiality of Bhagavān towards the devas, 42–3
Śunaḥśepa legend, 102 f.
Śunaḥśepa :—
in Bhā. P., 102–3
in Rv., 103
in Taitt. Sam., 103
in Kāṭhaka Sam., 103
in Kapiṣṭhala Kāṭha Sam., 103
in Av., 104
in Aita. Brāh., 104–5
in Rv. and Aita. Brāh. compared, 105–6
in Śāṅkhyā. Śrauta., 106
in Nirukta, 106
in Bṛhaddevatā, 107

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

in Sarvānukramaṇī, 107
in Vāsiṣṭha Dharmaśāstra, 107
in Manusmṛ., 107
in Rāmā., 107–8
in Rāmā. and Aita. Brāh. compared, 108–9
in MBH., 110
in Harivaṁśa, 110
in Brahma P., 110–1
in Vāyu P., 111
in Devī Bhā., 111
Sadgurusiṣya's reference to, 107
Sāyaṇa's reference to, 107
Sūrdās, 241–2
Svāyambhuva manvantara, 33

T

Temples :—
Yogamūrtis in, 258 f.
Keśava images in, 260–1
Veṇugopāla images in, 263
Varāhāvatāra images, 264–6
anantaśayana images in, 268–70
Tīrtaṅkara Ṛṣabha, 34–5
Tukārām, 245–6
Tulasīdāsa, 247

V

Vāsudeva :—
in Sanskrit literature, 186–8
identified with Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa, 189–91
identified with gopālakṛṣṇa, 191–2
Vaiṣṇavism :—
and inscriptions, 188–9, 214–20, 238
tengalai and vadagalai, 230–1, 234
Virāṭpuruṣa or Mahāpuruṣa, 18–9
Vīrabhadra, 91–2
Viṣṇu :—
24 names of, 252–3
and Vaikuṇṭha, 140
development from Ṛgvedic times, 182–4

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Index of Verses from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, used as sources arranged Skandha wise.

I Skandha

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
1	1	15
1	3	171
1	22	313
2	11	152
2	12	153
2	13	292
2	18–20	213
2	21	131
2	28	88
2	32	206
3	13	292
3	18	130
3	23	130, 204
3	26	4, 209
3	34	137
5	14	313
5	15	6
6	35	15
7	10	155
7	36	308
7	45	280
8	18–43	286
8	52	14, 295
9	17	302
9	29	303
9	42	206
9	48	283
10	21 f.	287
10	29	271
10	32	307
11	22	311
11	24	285
11	31	286
12	7–9	251
12	11–12	272
13	1–2	302
13	25	16
13	30	311
13	57	279
14	11	302
14	25	194
14	41 f.	309
15	14	315
15	36	16
16	1	145
16	2	277
16	11	308
17	5	293
17	11	306
17	30	309
17	38–9	17
18	2	145
18	46	145
19	4	145
19	33	311
19	36–7	18

II Skandha

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
1	11	150
1	22	18
1	23	18
2	4	315
2	8	254
2	8	19
2	21	20
4	18	161

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
5	5	206
5	22	25
5	33-4	202
6	31	204
7	51	29
10	1	6
10	2	6, 141
10	3	127
10	4	127
10	5	132
10	6	132
10	7	140
	III Skandha	
1	15	307
1	29	194
2	2	145
4	1	318
4	6-8	257
5	20	312
5	23-7	25
6	8	21
7	10	29
8	11	207
8	14	22
8	15 f.	202
11	1	29
11	3	129
11	4	129
13	12	306
13	27	263
13	31-3	263
14	11	283
15	13	139
15	14	140
16	12	159
16	26	159
19	4	309
19	13	303
21	9-11	260
22	10	272
22	15	273
23	4-5	282
23	28-9	316
23	31	316
25	38	222
26	3-4	23
26	5	23
26	6-7	24
26	15	24
26	17	24
26	18	24
27	6-11	134
27	21-6	31, 32
28	2-7	30, 31
28	17	224
28	47	318
29	8-12	152
29	11-12	32
29	15-19	228
30	20	310
31	33-5	290
31	39	290
32	19-20	299
32	41-2	233
	IV Skandha	
1	4	275
1	6	275
2	13-6	98
3	3	296
3	4	285
3	6-7	286
4	17	288
4	19-20	288
4	24-7	289
5	15	99
6	7	89
6	42	89
6	43	98

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
7	18–20	261, 314
7	51–2	90
7	54	90
8	2–4	277
8	28	302
8	45–9	260
8	48	314
9	7	205
9	20–1	312
9	60–4	311
9	66	307
10	11–2	308
10	23–6	304
12	12	306
12	39	312
13	22	310
13	25	295
14	1	305
14	35	313
14	39–40	305
15	18	312, 316
16	6	312
16	13–4	310
16	23	312
18	30 f.	313
18	49	317
19	4–6	256
21	17	314
21	22	306
22	4–6	311
22	39	213
22	45	310
23	13	137
22	36	308
24	25	283
24	34–6	203
24	62	296
25	57	291
28	30–1	10
30	16	271

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
	V Skandha	
1	31	34
1	32–3	34
6	4	284
7	3	36
9	4	300
9	7	279
9	12	297
9	15–6	297
19	16	38
19	18	38
21	2–6	40
22	8	40
22	11	40
23	3	312
24	7	41
25	1	41
29	2	162
	VI Skandha	
1	8	43
1	22 f.	310
1	24	147
1	28–9	147
1	30	148
1	53	5
1	59–60	291
1	63–6	290
2	4	5
2	8–10	148
2	9	310
2	11	148
2	18–9	7
3	16	271
4	29–32	26
7	30	311
7	36	293
8	12	262
8	18	310
10	33	310

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
12	10	312
12	13–4	309
12	35	157
14	11	271
14	17–8	306
14	19	308
14	26	283
14	33–4	300
14	40	283
16	18	173
18	33–4	282
18	52	316
19	9	125
19	11–4	126
	VII Skandha	
1	1–2	42
1	15	157
1	17	157
1	19	158
1	23	158
1	24	159
1	25	158
1	26	158
1	30	160
1	31	159
1	38	159
2	31	271
2	40	302
2	50–60	280
3	36–8	145
4	36	144
4	37–8	156
4	39–41	150
5	23–4	153
5	37	314
5	39–40	130
5	40–41	144
5	43–5	130
7	21	313
7	34–6	149
9	9	223
9	10	44
9	40	271
9	42–4	44
10	24	307
10	64–5	302
11	21–4	292
11	25 f.	281
11	35	293
12	9	291
14	11	285
15	7	296
15	17	316
15	38–9	294
15	70	318
17	33	312
	VIII Skandha	
1	19	46
1	23	46
1	27	46
3	31–3	131
4	7	11
5	7	46
6	2–6	256
6	9	296
8	7	46
9	9–10	290
10	45–52	304
11	4–6	303
12	15	291
13	11	46
13	18	46
13	21	46
13	24	46
13	27	46
13	30	47
13	33	47
17	4	260
19	30 f.	309

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Digitized by Sarayu Foundation Trust , Delhi and eGangotri Funding : IKS

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
	IX Skandha	
1	21–2	304
2	2	47
2	16	47
4	16	141
4	18	142
4	28	142
4	30	142
4	31–2	254
4	35	142
4	51	143
4	60	140
4	63–6	137
4	68	137, 223
4	71	143
5	2	144
5	11–2	144
6	4	49
6	12	49
6	22–3	50
6	26–7	271
6	31	51
7	6	51
8	3	280
8	5–6	52
9	33	318
9	36	280
9	49	194
15	1	56
15	17–9	112
17	2–3	57
17	4	57
18	20–3	274
19	22–3	58
20	8–10	274
20	15–6	272
20	18	300
20	23	59
20	30	59
20	34–5	271
20	36–7	284
21	20	59
22	4	63
22	20–5	65
24	11	67
24	28–31	68
24	39	68
24	45	68
	X Skandha	
1	34	69
2	11–2	298
3	6–8	70
4	12	71
5	1–2	300
7	5–6	72
7	45	300
8	11	301
10	14	295
14	4	14
14	46 f.	260
16	28	73
21	2–5	262
22	1–3	298
22	27	75, 168
24	13–4	75, 302
24	19	284
26	3	168
29	1	162
29	4	164
29	5–11	76, 316
29	16	162
29	19	170
29	26	167
29	42	162
29	43	76
29	48	168
30	12–3	318
30	14	224
30	17	171
30	21	172

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Adhyāya	Verse	Page
30	22	172
30	23	172
30	26	76
30	26–7	77
32	2	163
32	3	77, 164
3	8	172
33	3	162
33	28–9	169
33	31	169
33	32	169
33	37	169
33	38	162
34	1–2	298
34	17	151
36	21–2	312
36	26	299
36	37	78
38	31	315
41	32	314
41	39	315
41	40	314
42	3–5	315
43	17	171
44	39	157
45	26	301
48	32–5	79
50	49 f.	307
52	18	272
52	26	289
52	34	306
52	42	298
53	24	289
53	27	302
54	5	315
54	8	312, 315
54	35	309
55	4–6	317
56	35	298
56	36 f.	271
57	8	290
58	15	312
58	31	273
58	42	279
55	45–7	279
59	17	315
71	23	278
71	25	278
74	18–9	81
74	36	318
74	45	157
74	76	160
76	8	81
77	10	81
77	25–7	303, 304
79	9–21	266
81	4	5
86	8–9	273
88	25–6	139
89	55–6	261

XI Skandha

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
1	23–4	317
2	11	194
2	52	83
3	31	156
3	47	296
3	49–51	226
5	13	296
5	29	203
5	36	147
5	38–40	10
7	33–5	83
8	19	317
9	23	160
9	27	271
11	19	284
13	20–4	26
16	32	212
21	1	197

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VERSE INDEX

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
23	36–8	294
26	32	313
92	33	316
27	1	194
27	12	250
27	49	296
28	19	313
30	28–32	258
30	33	84
31	18–20	280

Adhyāya	Verse	Page
XII Skandha		
1	13	85
1	16	85
3	51	147
3	52	151
6	11–12	86
7	9	128
7	13	128
7	23–4	86
11	21	203

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ERRATA

p. 10 faith for faitɥ

p. 59. conquered for conquerred.

p. 78 wrongly printed as 79.

p. 80. the for thə.

p. 117. reverence for reverance.

pp. 129–160 chapter IV instead of chapter III

p. 192. epithets for epithetes.

p. 287. while for where.

p. 127. foot notes 3 and 4 are both marked II 10. 3. This should come after 4. The entire verse is II 10. 3.

p. 324. line 4 otherwise for otherwirse line 12 conjunct line 13 pronuciation for pronuciation line 4 from the bottom fellow for follow.

p. 333. 'Bhāgavata Purāṇa' translation by J. M. Sanyal (Calcutta) and Gita Press Gorakhpur.
'Viṣṇu Purāṇa' translation by H. H. Wilson, London 1840.

for

'Bhāgavata Purāṇa' translation by H. H. Wilson. London 1940.

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